PROTAGONIST OF PRUDENCE: A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN WENTWORTH, THE KING'S LAST GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PAUL WENDELL WILDERSON III.

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PROTAGONIST OF PRUDENCE:
A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN WENTWORTH, THE KING'S LAST
GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

by

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B.A., University of Colorado, 1966
M.A., University of Denver, 1970

A THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
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July 1, 1977
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<td>SPG</td>
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ABSTRACT

PROTAGONIST OF PRUDENCE:
A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN WENTWORTH, THE KING'S LAST
GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

by

PAUL W. WILDERSON III

John Wentworth stands out among royal governors for the small degree of enmity he engendered in his own province and America while remaining loyal to Great Britain through the crisis of the American Revolution. This biography examines John Wentworth's life from his birth in 1737 to his final departure from New Hampshire in 1775. It looks at the background, personality, ideas, and surroundings of the man in an effort to understand the sources of his popularity and success during difficult times. The study searches for solutions that Wentworth, who considered himself a man caught in the middle, may have visualized as alternatives to revolution in the conflict between Britain and America. It also attempts to deal with the validity of the seemingly obvious question of why he chose the side that he did.

John Wentworth was born into one of the most powerful dynastic families in the history of colonial America. In 1763, following graduation from Harvard College and several years as a merchant in Portsmouth, he traveled to England on family business. A chance meeting there with the Marquis of Rockingham, who turned out to be a distant relative, proved a significant
watershed in Wentworth's life. On the elevation of Rockingham in 1765 to the head of the Ministry, John was one of the first to recommend to him repeal of the troublesome Stamp Act. In turn he was impressed by Rockingham's deliberate determination to achieve that goal for the best interests of all parts of the British Empire. In 1766, when it became apparent that his uncle, aging Benning Wentworth, would be removed from the governorship of New Hampshire for malfeasance in office, John received the governor's commission from Rockingham.

Convinced that the basis of a sound Empire lay in the economic vitality and integration of all its parts, John Wentworth returned to New Hampshire in 1767 determined to make his province a productive member of the British mercantile system. He promoted settlement of the interior, education and legal services for the new inhabitants in the form of Dartmouth College and a county system, and a network of roads for transportation and communication. This all served, along with his youthful gregariousness, to give him a broader popular support than his uncle had ever enjoyed. At the same time the continuing dispute between the colonies and Britain made his position always more tenuous than Benning Wentworth's had ever been.

John Wentworth, above all a man of moderation and prudence, was consistently irritated both by the instigators and implementors of British policy and by the actions of the colonists who opposed it. His main goal became to prevent open defiance of royal authority until more reasoned policies were put into effect. Largely through his popularity, his control over the legislature, and the fact that the political atmosphere
in New Hampshire never was as radical as that of neighboring Massachusetts, he succeeded until late 1774. Then a combination of events beyond his control and his own desperation led to his estrangement from the rest of the colony.

John Wentworth put little stock in the constitutional arguments paraded by the patriots, but he was convinced that some kind of constitutional accommodation would be necessary to produce a lasting peace. Most of all, though, he hoped that the Rockinghamites or a like administration would be returned to Whitehall. That would ensure a solution based on moderation and the mutual benefit of all parties. When Wentworth was forced to leave his province in 1775 he had no conception of an irrevocable split between England and America. He had no idea that he would never see New Hampshire again.
PROTAGONIST OF PRUDENCE:

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN WENTWORTH, THE KING'S LAST

GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
"I have engaged my Honor for the Province of New Hampshire, that their Conduct will be temperate and dutiful, and that they will rejoice to receive this relief from the parental care and justice of the mother Country. Let me intreat you to propagate this Sentiment of Generosity. Let not our Enemies triumph. Silence them for ever by a prudent Conduct."

John Wentworth, London, March 1, 1766
(to a fellow colonist on repeal of the Stamp Act)

"Is it not to be regretted that . . . British subjects shou'd be goaded into Excess by either a Deficiency or contempt of conciliatory prudence in those who have to carry a disagreeable Measure into Execution."

John Wentworth, New Hampshire, August 9, 1768
(on colonial resistance to the Townshend Act)

"In the Course of the long American Business from the Year 1765 to 1782 I had occasion to observe the Conduct of all the Governours, and without meaning to disparage any I must say that not one of them has done his Duty in a more clear and manly a Style than John Wentworth: That he shew'd a mark'd Zeal for the Crown at the same time that he made not one Enemy to the Interests of Great Britain by any thing intemperate in that Zeal; that he lost a Noble Situation a large fortune and the hopes of an indefinite encrease to it, and that I have reason to be convinced that if he had join'd in the Revolt, he would have been in one of the most command-ing and most distinguish'd Situations in the United States."

Edmund Burke, 1792
INTRODUCTION

The royal governor in eighteenth-century America was by the nature of his office an isolated individual. The sovereignty of the English Crown was vested in him alone. In most matters his decisions were final and irrevocable. In fact his legal power in relationship to the legislature was greater than that of the King of England to Parliament. Although some governors had been able to "win the respect, esteem, and even the affection"¹ of the people, after 1763 fear of their "arbitrary and threatening executive powers"² combined with the increasingly odious measures of the British government assured a rising degree of enmity between the governor and the inhabitants of his province. By 1774 this submerged hostility had erupted in some cases into open warfare and during the next two years every royal governor was forced from office.

One of the first to leave was Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts. Although the people of Boston were too much upset with the closing of their port on June 1, 1774, to express any feelings of joy at the departure of their governor for England that day, no governor in America had aroused more negative sentiment than Thomas Hutchinson. His most recent biographer states that Hutchinson "was one of the most hated men on earth--more hated than Lord North, more hated than George III ... and more feared than the sinister Earl of Bute. The distrust and the animosity Thomas Hutchinson inspired surpass any ordinary bounds. The reactions he stirred are morbid, pathological, paranoic in their intensity."³ Although
not all of the royal governors provoked hostility to the extent of Thomas Hutchinson, it would be difficult to find one for whom any good feeling could be found in America after 1776. There does, however, appear to be one exception to this generalization, one colonial governor at the outbreak of the American Revolution who, though only sixty miles distant from Hutchinson, stood at the opposite end of the scale in the degree of ill-will he engendered. The governor was John Wentworth of New Hampshire.

Mercy Otis Warren, patriot historian of the Revolution, in discussing Thomas Hutchinson, referred again and again to the "pernicious influence of that 'dark, intriguing, insinuating, haughty, and ambitious' man--so diligent a student of 'the intricacies of Machiavellian policy,' so subtle a solicitor of popular support, so hypocritical in his sanctity and ruthless in his lust for power--and to the fatal consequences of 'his pernicious administration.'" The Reverend Jeremy Belknap, Congregational minister in Dover, New Hampshire, in the years preceding the Revolution, ardent supporter of the American cause, and himself a historian of repute, later discussed the last royal governor of his province in very different terms. Belknap wrote that it was "easy to conclude" that John Wentworth's "intentions were pacific; and whilst the temper of the times allowed him to act agreeable to his own principles, his government was acceptable and beneficial; but when matters had come to the worst, his faults were as few, and his conduct as temperate, as could be expected from a servant of the crown. If a comparison be drawn, between him and most of the other
governors on this continent, at the beginning of the revolution he must appear to advantage. Instead of widening the breach, he endeavored to close it; and when his efforts failed, he retired from a situation, where he could no longer exercise the office of a governor."  

John Adams, a man of volatile passions, carried a hatred for Thomas Hutchinson that time could never heal. Although Adams had much greater reason to be embittered toward Hutchinson than toward his Harvard classmate, Governor John Wentworth, it is hard to conceive of Adams not holding a strong prejudice against any supporter of the British position, especially while the fighting was still going on. Yet an incident in Paris in 1778 indicates that Adams held no ill-feeling for John Wentworth, even at this crucial period in American affairs. Emerging from his box after an evening at the theater, Adams later wrote, "a Gentleman seized me by the hand. I looked at him. — Governor Wentworth, Sir, said the Gentleman. — At first I was somewhat embarrassed, and knew not how to behave towards him. As my Classmate and Friend at Colledge and ever since, I could have pressed him to my Bosom, with the most cordial Affection. But we now belonged to two different Nations at War with each other and consequently We were Enemies." Adams, aware that spies of the French police were watching their every move and unsure of how to respond, was visibly relieved when Wentworth took the initiative and made small talk inquiring after his father and friends whom he had left behind in America. He then asked Adams about the
health of Dr. Franklin and said he must come out to Passi to pay his respects to that gentleman. After Wentworth's visit several days later, Adams seemed quite pleased to be able to say of his old friend, "Not an indelicate expression to Us or our Country or our Ally escaped him. His whole behaviour was that of an accomplished Gentleman."\(^3\)

In the early nineteenth century, the Reverend Timothy Dwight on one of his travels through New Hampshire, paused to reflect on John Wentworth. According to Dwight, Governor Wentworth "retired from the chair with an unimpeachable character, and with higher reputation than any other man who at that time held the same office in this country."\(^9\) Later in the century the chronicler of the Loyalists of the American Revolution wrote that John Wentworth had always maintained "the respect of his political opponents," and went on to say that "not one of the public men of the time who clung to the Royal cause will go down to posterity with a more enviable fame. Had Bernard, Hutchinson, Tryon, Franklin, Dunmore, Martin, and the other Loyalist Governors been like him, the Revolution might have been delayed."\(^10\)

The Revolution, though, was not delayed and John Wentworth, like the other royal governors, could not avoid the fate of history. Appointed in 1766, he assumed the governor's responsibilities in New Hampshire a year later and vigorously and conscientiously carried them out until the late summer of 1775. At that time, no longer able to forestall in his small northern colony the crescendo of revolutionary events that was
engulfing British America, and fearing for the safety of his family and himself, Wentworth fled New Hampshire fully expecting to return. He had no idea that he would never see his native province again.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION


5Mercy Otis Warren, History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution . . . (Boston, 1805), as quoted in Bailyn, Thomas Hutchinson, 3.


7Bailyn, Thomas Hutchinson, 2.


10Lorenzo Sabine, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution (Boston, 1854), 2:411.
CHAPTER I

SERVANTS OF THE KING:

THE WENTWORTHS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

It was to the central market town of Alford, in eastern Lincolnshire, that low-lying part of England characterized by fens and canals and most often likened to Holland just across the North Sea, that William Wentworth of Rigsby and his wife Susannah brought their baby William to be baptized, March 15, 1616. Young William was destined to be the first of the Wentworth family to go to America. He was distantly related to the Wentworths of Wentworth-Woodhouse in Yorkshire's West Riding. From that branch of the family were to come many of the great English Wentworths, including Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, beheaded in 1641 in the cause of King Charles I, and Charles Watson-Wentworth, Second Marquis of Rockingham, head of the British Ministry in 1765 at the time of the Stamp Act furor in America. 1

As he grew up, William Wentworth developed strong ties to the Reverend John Wheelwright, the vicar of Bilsby, just east of Alford. Wheelwright had attended Cambridge, doubtless where he was oriented toward the Puritanism that would determine the rest of his life. In 1632 his benefice at Bilsby was declared vacant by the Church, an action stemming from alleged unorthodox opinions emanating from his pulpit. Left with only the gleanings of some inherited lands to support his family, Wheelwright, in the spring of 1636, made the decision to remove to New England where others of like
spiritual views had already proceeded, most importantly his wife's brothers, William and Edward Hutchinson, and their families.

The first evidence of William Wentworth in America is his signature, among a number of others headed by that of John Wheelwright, on a mutual compact of government at Exeter, New Hampshire, dated July, 1639. It appears that Wentworth, only twenty-one at the time, was among a group of Wheelwright's relatives and "friends" who disembarked at Boston in July, 1637. He did not know that he had left a religious and political controversy in England only to step into another in Massachusetts of which John Wheelwright and his sister-in-law, Anne Hutchinson, were at the center. Accused of spreading unorthodox religious opinions, Hutchinson and Wheelwright were considered threats to the Puritan experiment in Massachusetts. As a result, in late 1637 these Antinomians, as they were derisively termed by their accusers, were banished from the colony. Mrs. Hutchinson and her family, following the example of Roger Williams, proceeded to Rhode Island. Choosing not to go to that haven for proscribed sectaries south of the Bay, John Wheelwright gathered about twenty of his followers and their families together in the chill of late November, 1637, and set out north through the snow to found the community of Exeter in the wilderness of New Hampshire. William Wentworth was in all probability a member of that party.²

John Wheelwright moved several more times before returning to England upon the rise of one of his fellow footballers at Cambridge, Oliver Cromwell, to the position of Lord Protector.
William Wentworth by 1650 had found a permanent home in Dover, New Hampshire, then under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. By means of several grants he acquired a generous quantity of land and rights to a mill privilege on a nearby stream. He soon became involved in the developing lumber trade, something that would play a key role not only in the future of New Hampshire, but also in the rise to prominence of the Wentworth family within that province. Active in town affairs, William was chosen selectman as early as 1651. His greatest role, however, was that of Ruling Elder of the Dover church. In that capacity he assisted the pastor and did a substantial amount of preaching himself, sometimes at Dover and other times in neighboring communities such as South Berwick and Exeter. Thus Wentworth was known best to his friends and his posterity as Elder William. When King William's War made the threat of Indian attack a reality in 1689, Wentworth, at the advanced age of seventy-three, was credited with saving Heard's garrison and its occupants by lying on his back and bracing the door with his feet, while bullets whistled through it over his head. He continued to live an active life until 1697 when, shortly after being "taken speechless with a sudden shivering," he died at the age of eighty-one.3

Of the eleven known children of Elder William Wentworth, Samuel, born in 1641 in Exeter, was the oldest, and it was from him that the later governors of New Hampshire were descended. Samuel Wentworth moved to Portsmouth in 1678 and five years later, when the opportunity presented itself, he purchased the large and unusually fine home of Lieutenant Governor Cranfield.
Built in 1671, the house had served previously as a tavern and was now returned to that purpose. Samuel presided over his public house for seven years, but in March, 1691, he succumbed to one of the deadly killers of the colonial period, smallpox. The responsibilities of both family and business were left in the hands of his wife, Mary Benning Wentworth, and his nineteen-year-old son, John.4

In 1767 when Samuel's great-grandson John Wentworth came to the governor's chair he assumed the leadership not only of New Hampshire, but of the Wentworth family whose wealth, position, and political power had dominated the province for five decades. That legacy had its real beginning with Samuel Wentworth's son, John. In his father's spacious tavern John Wentworth in 1693 married Sarah, daughter of a prominent Portsmouth sea captain, Mark Hunking. Here too were his sixteen children born, among them a future governor of New Hampshire, Benning, and the father of yet another governor, Mark Hunking.5 John Wentworth, as so many others in the sea-faring community of Portsmouth, started his career as a ship captain and with advancing age moved to the more sedentary role of merchant. In 1712 he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the New Hampshire Council and shortly was chosen as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas. Although New Hampshire by this time had been dislodged from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts and made a separate royal province, it still was not large or influential enough to warrant a separate governor. Because the governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire rarely ventured above the Merrimack, executive responsibilities in
the northern province were largely in the hands of the lieutenant governor. When in 1717 Lieutenant Governor George Vaughan was removed after antagonizing both Governor Samuel Shute and the New Hampshire Council and Assembly, John Wentworth was chosen for the post.6

Wentworth served as Lieutenant Governor of New Hampshire from 1717 until his death in 1730. He gained popularity with the people and the Assembly for his vigorous activity in the three-year Indian war of the early 1720's. The historian Jeremy Belknap tells us that he "was particularly careful to supply the garrisons with stores, and visit them in person, to see that the duty was regularly performed." Of even more importance to the Assembly was the fact that Wentworth had made every member of that body, along with his family and close associates, proprietors in several new townships that he had granted. The Lieutenant Governor undoubtedly used the period between 1722 and 1728, when there was no governor in Massachusetts, to consolidate his power and advance his family's position in New Hampshire. It was during this period, according to one historian, that "the Wentworths and their associated clans" who comprised "the ruling clique of Portsmouth merchants," were able to develop "a tightly woven coterie of wealth and political power." Wentworth was the leader of the New Hampshire faction pushing for complete separation from the province to the south. This desire was tied directly to the fact that the Massachusetts governor had made grants of land in territory claimed by New Hampshire, land that otherwise could be granted by Lieutenant Governor Wentworth to his
relations and members of the legislature. Governor Shute, however, had covered himself in New Hampshire by distributing grants of land and political appointments to certain influential families, primarily the Waldrons and the Sherburnes, thus setting the stage for future strife in New Hampshire between the "Massachusetts Party" and those agitating for a total break with the Bay Colony. When Jonathan Belcher became a candidate for the governorship of Massachusetts he was pleased that Lieutenant Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire would bother to write and wish him success. Upon achieving his goal in 1730 Belcher was just as displeased to discover that Wentworth had sent a similar note to his opponent. This affront insured continued enmity between the governor of Massachusetts and his adherents in New Hampshire and the collection of Portsmouth merchants that had gathered around Lieutenant Governor Wentworth. John Wentworth was not concerned with this struggle long, however, for he died later in that same year. Leadership of the Portsmouth group dedicated to the independence of New Hampshire now fell to another Wentworth, John's eldest son, Benning, soon to be a member of the Assembly and later advanced to the Council in spite of Belcher's opinion of him as a "rascal" and a "contemptible simpleton."  

Born in 1696 and a graduate of Harvard College, Benning Wentworth was a merchant, first in Boston and later in his native Portsmouth, dealing largely in the New Hampshire timber trade, especially with Spain. In 1732 Wentworth was elected to the House of Representatives where he and Theodore Atkinson, who married Benning's sister Hannah in that same year, created
as much trouble as possible for Governor Belcher. Lieutenant Governor Dunbar, though not a native of New Hampshire, was equally opposed to Belcher and had recommended Wentworth and Atkinson for places on the Council. Belcher managed to block these appointments for two years, but in 1734 was forced to accept the inevitable. Wentworth soon, however, became more concerned with his personal affairs. In 1733, as a result of deteriorating relations between Spain and England, the Spanish reneged on a huge payment due Benning Wentworth for a valuable shipment of New England oak delivered to Cadiz. To satisfy his Boston creditors, Wentworth borrowed money in London and then badgered the English government to press the Spanish for payment, but to no avail. Benning Wentworth was bankrupt in 1738 when New Hampshire's English agent, John Thomlinson, came to his rescue. Thomlinson had convinced Wentworth's creditors that their best chances of being repaid lay in backing him as the independent governor of New Hampshire. Jonathan Belcher had other enemies besides the Wentworth faction and in 1741 when William Shirley replaced him as governor of Massachusetts, New Hampshire also received a new governor, one of its own for the first time, Benning Wentworth. 8

More than anyone else, Benning Wentworth was responsible for making the name of Wentworth nearly legendary in New Hampshire. He essentially "ruled" the province for twenty-five years, the longest reign of any governor in the history of England's American colonies. But Wentworth did not go unchallenged throughout this period. There was still a remnant of Belcher's party in New Hampshire, led by Richard Waldron,
that was determined to undermine the new governor's authority at any cost. When Waldron contrived a plan to have the governor replaced and filed a complaint against him in England, Wentworth effectively countered the charge. More serious was the threat mounted by Waldron and his cohorts in the Assembly elected in 1748. In that year the governor had issued precepts to a number of new towns to return representatives to the House, which they did. The Waldron faction, charging that this was a violation of the House's own prerogative, organized a majority of the old members to vote against seating the new representatives. Wentworth in response disallowed the House's choice of Speaker, Waldron himself, and would not recognize them as a legally constituted body. With the battle lines drawn the House took up the offensive; they petitioned the Crown and wrote to their agent, Thomlinson, leveling serious charges against the governor and asking for his removal.

What they did not know was that Thomlinson, a mast contractor for the Royal Navy, had a close working relationship with Benning Wentworth who, besides being governor of New Hampshire which shipped out most of America's white pine masts, had in 1743 also received the commission of Surveyor General of His Majesty's Woods in North America. In addition Wentworth, expecting just such a challenge to his authority, had requested and received additional instructions specifically granting him the power to issue election precepts to new communities. The opposition's efforts in England failed, but they continued to hold out hope in America. Wentworth kept the Assembly in session but because of its "notorious and unjustifiable . . ."
Act of disobedience" refused to grant it legal recognition. As a result public affairs in New Hampshire, including the collection of taxes, payment of militia, occupation of new lands, even the payment of the governor which by this time Wentworth felt he could weather, came to a virtual halt for three years. Under the province's triennial act Governor Wentworth finally called for new elections and when the new Assembly met early in 1752 there was a clear sentiment for conciliation. The new members were seated and Wentworth had won a victory for the royal prerogative unparalleled in American colonial history.9

Wentworth's triumph ended the only serious threat to his consolidation of power in New Hampshire, and under his leadership and patronage an elite group of Portsmouth merchants, consisting primarily of close family and friends, came to dominate the highest political offices and most lucrative economic opportunities in the province.10 The Council and judicial offices were controlled by his relatives and they were made proprietors in nearly all of the numerous townships granted by the governor. Mark Hunking Wentworth, as brother of the Surveyor General of the Woods, monopolized the New Hampshire mast trade as agent for the Royal Navy's contractor, Thomlinson, and as a result became the wealthiest man in the colony. Yet Wentworth was too clever a politician to ignore areas where criticism might emerge. After the Waldron faction had dissipated its strength in the three-year controversy, the governor saw to it that land, lesser offices, military commissions, and supply contracts were distributed liberally
among House members. To further placate the Assembly Wentworth, when the occasion demanded, would ignore his instructions and let bills, which he knew would be disapproved by the home government, pass into law without the precautionary suspending clause. There were few representatives, most themselves men of property, who did not benefit by Wentworth's rule in New Hampshire. The people in general too were satisfied. Land was always in demand and Wentworth, buoyed by the belief that New Hampshire's jurisdiction extended almost as far west as the Hudson River, viewed the supply as nearly endless. As a result he placed the terms of acquisition and occupation, small fees or sometimes no fee at all and a quit rent of one ear of Indian corn for the first ten years, within nearly everyone's grasp.\(^{11}\) And Wentworth, as governor of a colony that depended for its prosperity on the timber trade more than any other industry, was in a position as Surveyor General to alienate large numbers of people by a strict enforcement of British mast laws that restricted the cutting of New Hampshire's valuable white pine. Yet, as long as the Wentworth interests received their masts and maintained their profits, he conveniently overlooked legal irregularities that constantly occurred in New Hampshire's forests. Thus Wentworth maintained the loyalty of his constituents, both large and small.

One of the most difficult tasks of every royal governor was the delicate balancing act of satisfying both the people of his province and the government in England. For most of his twenty-five years as governor, Benning Wentworth was able to do this. He convinced London that there was no illegal
trade in or out of the Piscataqua, and that no one could be more diligent than himself in enforcing the mast laws. He was active in prosecuting the war against the French and Indians and his support of Anglicanism, including a lot set aside in every new town for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, further endeared him to those in power in England. Finally, but not least important, was the influence wielded by agent John Thomlinson at court. Thomlinson, close to the Duke of Newcastle and with contacts in most government agencies including the Board of Trade, performed invaluable services for Benning Wentworth. When needed he obtained additional instructions or permission to disregard instructions for Wentworth, he was able to prevent disputes involving Wentworth from reaching the Privy Council, and kept the governor apprized of any adverse gossip circulating in England that might be detrimental to his position.

From Whitehall to the forests of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth had control of his own political situation. Through monopoly of New Hampshire's prime resources, land and timber, he was able not only to enrich his relations, but to accumulate a personal fortune large enough to offset any worries about whether or not the Assembly would see fit to grant him a proper salary each year. He lived in a large, rambling house of fifty-two rooms, many with elegant wainscoting, two miles south of Portsmouth hard by the water at Little Harbor. One of those rooms, high ceilinged and with an elaborately carved mantel, served as a Council Chamber, especially during the latter part of his administration when he was afflicted with
severe attacks of gout. Occasionally he even invited the members of the Assembly out for refreshments, no doubt including a toast to the King, the ostensible source of all their good fortune.

Benning Wentworth had created a highly effective political machine, notable for its stability and the general harmony it produced. A noted historian has termed New Hampshire "the exception that helps explain the rule" of American colonies during this period that were torn by factionalism and political strife, important elements in the "latently revolutionary" character of eighteenth-century America. But Wentworth could not go on indefinitely, and in the 1760's new circumstances, some beyond his control, began to produce small fissures in his well-organized system. John Thomlinson began to lose his health and with it his influence and effectiveness for Wentworth in British government circles. Insuring this development, Newcastle and his supporters fell from power in 1761 when young George III brought in his favorite, Lord Bute. Governor Wentworth not only lost his leverage in England but now had also to contend with the efforts of an avowed enemy, John Huske, whose father Wentworth had forced to resign from the Chief Justiceship of New Hampshire in 1754. Huske, who had influence among the new elements in English government, was elected to Parliament in 1764. Adding to these problems were hearings opened by the Board of Trade in 1763, at the request of New York, into the legitimacy of New Hampshire jurisdiction and land grants west of the Connecticut River. As a result, not only were these lands forfeited to New York, but further
investigations into Governor Wentworth's activities were carried out and by 1765 British officials were convinced that Wentworth's abuse of power required his removal. As the governor became aware of the seriousness of his situation, he began to seek help in salvaging at least his dignity if not his position. He was fortunate, for his vigorous, intelligent nephew, Mark Hunking Wentworth's son, John, was at that time in England. John had become an intimate of the Marquis of Rockingham, who in 1765 rose to the head of the British Ministry, and he was willing to intercede with the government on behalf of his uncle. When, in 1767 amidst an unsettling background of increasing hostility between the colonies and Great Britain, old, gouty Benning Wentworth finally relinquished his responsibilities as governor of New Hampshire after twenty-five long and eventful years, young John Wentworth was there to take his place.
NOTES

CHAPTER I


3 Wentworth, Genealogy, 1:84-99.


5 Only fourteen of the children survived. For a brief description of each see the New England Historical and Genealogical Register 4(1850):334-38.


7 Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:202; Clark, Eastern Frontier, 299-300, 106. Belcher is quoted in Clark, 300.

8 Clifford K. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates (Boston, 1873-1975) 6:113-17; Clark, Eastern Frontier, 300-01; Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:262-63.

10 Enemies of Wentworth deeply resented this family control of New Hampshire and some, such as Richard Waldron, kept close tabs on it. Among Waldron's papers was found a sheet headed "Family Government" with the following: "George Jaffrey, brother-in-law, president of the council, treasurer, chief justice and justice of the admiralty. Jotham Odiorne, brother married his grand daughter, second judge and justice. Henry Sherburne, cousin &c. counsellor, &c. Theodore Atkinson, brother-in-law, secretary, chief justice of inferior court, &c. Richard Wibird, governor's brother married his sister, a counsellor. Ellis Huske, wife's brother married governor's sister, a counsellor. Samuel Solley, who married George Jaffrey's daughter, a counsellor. Thomas Packer, a brother-in-law, high sheriff. John Downing and Samuel Smith, counsellors, related by their cash. Friends, Wiggin, justice and judge of probate, Clarkson, Gage, Wallingford, Gilman, Palmer, Roby, Jenness, Odiorne, Walton and Stevens, justice."


11 For the terms of Benning Wentworth's land grants see William H. Fry, New Hampshire as a Royal Province (New York, 1908), 290-92.


CHAPTER II

A VARIED EDUCATION: PORTSMOUTH, CAMBRIDGE, AND BOSTON 1737-1755

The birth of a son, John, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the ninth of August, 1757, must have been especially pleasing to Mark Hunking and Elizabeth Rindge Wentworth since two earlier children had died. Hoping to change what seemed to have been a bad omen of naming the first two sons Mark, after their father, this child was named for his grandfather, John Wentworth, who had been Lieutenant Governor of New Hampshire from 1717 until his death in 1730. Five days later the boy was baptized in Queen's Chapel by the Reverend Arthur Browne, a missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel who just within the previous year had been appointed rector of New Hampshire's only Anglican congregation.¹ Not only was John born into a politically important family on the paternal side, his mother, Elizabeth, was the daughter of John Rindge, a prominent Portsmouth merchant. As province agent in Britain in the early 1730's, Rindge had initiated proceedings that eventually led to settlement of the long-standing New Hampshire-Massachusetts boundary dispute. He was also the man who hired the influential London merchant, John Thomlinson, as New Hampshire's permanent agent in England.² Thus, through both parents John Wentworth inherited a highly respectable place in the mercantile aristocracy that governed Portsmouth and New Hampshire.
Little is known of Mark Hunking Wentworth beyond the fact that he was a merchant and shipowner who eventually acquired great wealth. When his son was born in 1737 the Wentworths' circumstances were not what they had been, nor what they would become in the future. Mark Hunking's father, the Lieutenant Governor, had died seven years earlier. His brother Benning, thirteen years his senior, had been a member of the Assembly and the Council, but was now struggling under the burden of a great debt verging on bankruptcy as a result of his losses in the Spanish timber trade. At the age of twenty-eight, although Mark was involved in trading ventures with brother Benning, brother-in-law Theodore Atkinson, his father-in-law John Rindge, and others, he probably was still considered a junior partner. Even so, by 1737 when his son was born he had done well. Moreover, his fortunes were about to take a turn for the better.

In the late 1730's a fortuitous set of circumstances combined to improve the position of all the Wentworths including Mark Hunking. During the thirties he and Theodore Atkinson had been trading with the English merchant and New Hampshire agent John Thomlinson. Toward the end of the decade Thomlinson, with his influence at court and connections in New Hampshire, known in England for its pine timber, was able to get a contract from the Navy Board to supply the Royal Navy with masts. To help him fulfill his obligations to the Navy, Thomlinson turned to Mark Hunking Wentworth, whom he made his chief subcontractor or agent in New Hampshire, the man responsible for supplying him with sturdy white pine logs.
suitable for naval use. It was also in the late thirties that first the War of Jenkin's Ear with Spain, followed shortly by the broader conflict with France known in America as King George's War, "created a demand of unprecedented proportions by the British Navy for the white pines of New England." Added to these events, in 1741 Benning Wentworth, through the good offices of Thomlinson, was handed the governorship of New Hampshire. But even more important than this for the fortunes of Mark Hunking Wentworth was the purchase by Benning, just two years later, of the office of Surveyor General of His Majesty's Woods in North America. The Surveyor General's job was to protect potential mast trees for the British Government, and only he could grant the license needed to cut those masts. Thus by 1743 Mark Hunking Wentworth had a virtual monopoly over the mast trade, a lucrative business even in slow times but especially so during periods of war. By 1763, when the Peace of Paris finally brought an end to the British-French struggle in North America, Mark Wentworth was the richest man in Portsmouth.

John Wentworth likely had a pleasant childhood. Born into a family of position and wealth, he seems to have enjoyed close bonds with his parents. Many years later, long after he had left New Hampshire as a Loyalist, upon hearing that he had virtually been left out of his mother's will he wrote to cousin John Pierce in Portsmouth: the news "can never for a moment extort an unfilial tho't from my heart, which is dutifully & kindly attached to the memory of a venerable parent, whose parental care & attention to my earliest childhood
& youngest days implanted in my mind sentiments of reverence."

Beyond his immediate family, John formed close relationships among the many uncles, aunts, and cousins who made up the intricate network of Wentworth relations in the small society of Portsmouth. Some of these ties, such as that with the Pierces, lasted a lifetime even though Wentworth no longer lived in New Hampshire and by law could never return. John Pierce was the son of Daniel Pierce whose wife, Ann Rindge, was a sister of John Wentworth's mother. His mother's brother, Daniel Rindge, respected merchant and only five years his senior, was also one of John Wentworth's confidants. From England in 1765 he wrote to Rindge for advice and emphasized their "friendship which has been my peculiar happiness to have enjoyed from my earliest youth." John Wentworth's youth, spent amidst prosperity and familial warmth, was by all appearances happy, an assumption borne out by later opinions of him when an adult as extremely gracious and even-tempered, characteristics of a well adjusted personality.

In April, 1740, another son, Thomas, was born to Mark and Elizabeth Wentworth. It was also about that time, presumably with their growing family in mind, that the Wentworths moved to a large house at the corner of Daniel and Chapel Streets in Portsmouth. The house, built some years earlier by Captain Thomas Daniel after whom the street was later named, was of two stories with a gambrel roof, "massive chimneys," and a wine cellar large enough to hold a year's supply of the best Portuguese port and madeira. The house was
called by one who saw it shortly before it was demolished in the mid-nineteenth century, "a mansion of the highest class." From its description it sounds remarkably similar to a house directly across the street built by the Scottish born merchant and iron manufacturer, Archibald Macphaedris, in 1716. Built of brick and still standing, the Macphaedris house is one of the most elegant examples of early Georgian architecture in New England, and it seems quite probable that Captain Daniel kept his eye cast in this direction as he erected his own home. Giant elms in front of the Wentworths' new residence no doubt shaded numberless passers-by on this busy thoroughfare between the wharves on the river and Market Square at the center of town. Living just half-way along this short route, young John with little brother Thomas tagging along, must often have headed for the docks to catch a glimpse of sail down river on an inbound schooner, or to listen to sailors talk of where they had been or where they were going as they lowered down a butt of wine or heaved on a quintal of cod.

Outgoing vessels, as they slipped away from the Piscataqua wharves and threaded their way down that deep, narrow tidal channel among the numerous islands, through the pool, finally past Newcastle at the harbor mouth and into the open sea, were most often carrying products from New Hampshire's forests bound for the West Indies. Other items too were shipped out, such as beef, fish, rum, or horses, but the indispensable export was timber. This went as staves and hoops for barrels, building materials such as planks, joists, clapboards, and shingles, or sometimes completely finished as a large chest
of drawers or a delicate comb-back windsor chair crafted by one of Portsmouth's fine cabinetmakers. These were exchanged at Barbados, Antigua, Jamaica, and other ports of call in the Caribbean for sugar and molasses which might be brought directly back to Portsmouth and made into rum. More often, however, this West Indian produce was either transported to the southern and middle colonies and traded for foodstuffs and naval stores, or carried to England to be sold along with the Piscataqua built ship to pay earlier debts incurred there with merchants for British manufactured goods. There were of course variations and permutations of this trade. Occasionally a ship headed directly for England with a load of enumerated materials such as mast timber,\textsuperscript{12} and returned not only with sundry items for the shelves of local shopkeepers—Irish linen and German serge, bone lace, buttons, pins, ribbons, tea, coffee, nails, powder and shot, Staffordshire or porcelain dishes, East Indian spices—but also with ship fittings—canvas, cordage, iron ware—to complete vessels built from New Hampshire timber. At other times Piscataqua captains, such as those in the employ of Benning Wentworth, might steer for the Wine Islands, Portugal, or Spain, with fish or lumber to trade for casks of madeira, sherry, or port destined for the tables of Portsmouth merchants. Some ships were sent north to Newfoundland to take on fish for the Caribbean or Iberian trade; in addition, there was an active commercial intercourse with the colonies to the south. Still, the mainstay of the Portsmouth trade was lumber to the West Indies. This allowed New Hampshire to import the food it needed to supplement its
own supply, and to procure the manufactured niceties and necessities that it could not produce for itself.\(^\text{13}\)

The lure of the sea and images of far-away places were not the only sources of excitement for a boy growing up in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the 1740's. There was still a fierce struggle going on between England and its bitter rival France for control of the North American continent. From Quebec and the St. Lawrence in the northeast through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi to New Orleans in the southwest the French had virtually cordoned off the English seaboard colonies and were gradually edging eastward. Alliances with the numerous tribes of Indians in this vast hinterland were fostered by French fur traders and Jesuit missionaries and it was only a matter of time until the conflict which had stirred sporadically in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would break out again. The War of the Austrian Succession in Europe gave the French the excuse and in 1744 they attacked Nova Scotia, taken from them by the English in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, thus beginning in America what was known as King George's War.

New Hampshire was in a vulnerable position. Her sparse population was concentrated near the seacoast. The frontier was no further than twenty miles from Portsmouth, the capital and commercial center of the province. Sitting at the top of the tier of English colonies, closest to Canada, it was obviously open to attack from the French and their Indian allies. There was good reason, then, for John Wentworth's uncle, Benning, as Governor of New Hampshire, to back a plan
conceived by Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts. The design was to raise a large force among the New England colonies, and any others that could be induced to contribute, for the purpose of capturing the formidable French fortress of Louisbourg which, from its strategic location on Cape Breton Island, commanded the Gulf of St. Lawrence and protected Canada. Massachusetts voted £50,000 and raised 3,250 men for the expedition. Tiny New Hampshire could hardly match that, but Governor Wentworth did manage to wheedle £13,000 out of the Assembly and to raise 500 troops and an armed sloop to carry them. In keeping with the purely colonial nature of the operation, William Pepperrell, a merchant from Kittery, Maine, just across the river from Portsmouth, was given command of the total force of more than 4000 men.

The Louisbourg expedition of 1745 marked the greatest achievement of intercolonial cooperation prior to the American Revolution and American colonists, especially New Englanders, had just cause to be proud of their effort. During the late winter and early spring there undoubtedly was talk of little else in Portsmouth. In nearby Falmouth, Maine, the Reverend Thomas Smith, a New Light adherant of the Great Awakening, indicated that preparations for Louisbourg were even taking precedence over anticipation of the arrival of the greatest awakener of all, George Whitefield. Whitefield had in fact encouraged Pepperrell to accept the command in spite of his inexperience and later gave his personal blessing to the expedition. It is small wonder that Protestant leaders such as Whitefield should have strongly backed this effort, for
in addition to being a strategic military move, it was seen as a crusade against the detestable French papists, a "war upon the whore of Babylon." One of the chaplains who went with the troops, the Reverend Samuel Moody of York, Maine, carried along a hatchet specifically for the purpose of smashing "idolotrous images" in the French churches.

In late March the New Hampshire forces sailed by themselves to Canso, Nova Scotia, where they were shortly joined by the main body of troops that had left Boston harbor on March 24. Pepperrell had to hold his men at Canso for three weeks waiting for the April thaw to take the ice out of the Bay at Louisbourg. They sailed on April 29 but, due to slack winds, arrived at the great fortress the following morning instead of at night which ruined their plan of a surprise attack. In any event it would not have been an easy battle and a siege would have been necessary. On June 17, ill supplied and with a mutinous garrison on his hands, the French commander, Duchambon, surrendered to the motley New England militia of carpenters, farmers, and fishermen. When word of this stunning victory reached back down the coast—to Falmouth, Portsmouth, Boston—there was great rejoicing. A day of thanksgiving was declared in Massachusetts, Thomas Prince in Boston prayed that this would be "the dawning Earnest of our DIVINE REDEEMER'S carrying on his Triumphs thro' the Northern Regions," and while still at Louisbourg, William Pepperrell was made a baronet by George II, only the second American colonist to receive that honor. As one eighteenth-century historian claimed, the conquest "filled America with
joy, and Europe with astonishment." Unfortunately, the triumph at Louisbourg did not end the French and Indian threat to the frontier province of New Hampshire.14

In September, 1746, when John Wentworth was nine years old, news arrived of a French fleet at Nova Scotia, supposedly sent to retake Louisbourg and to wreak havoc on New England if not to conquer it in retaliation. Alarm was general up and down the coast. The militia was called up, fortifications were prepared, cannon emplaced. At Fort William and Mary in Newcastle at the entrance to Piscataqua harbor, a new battery of sixteen thirty-two and twenty-four pounders was installed. Samuel Lane, a farmer in nearby Stratham recorded in his journal that "we expected them hourly upon us; and people at Ports /mo[uth] work'd on Sabbath Days; to fortifie against them." But Lane went on to note with relief that "a kind providence, (and nothing that we did) Disapointed their Designs Against us." The saving "providence" was a batch of letters forwarded by Governor Shirley to Admiral Townsend at Louisbourg expressing the belief of New Englanders that an English fleet had followed the French to America. This news, when intercepted by a French cruiser and added to other distresses, led the French commander to take poison and the second officer to fall on his sword. When the rest sailed out to attack Annapolis, Nova Scotia, the fleet was scattered by a violent storm off Cape Sable Island and the survivors limped singly back to France. Thus Portsmouth and other New England seaboard towns were spared the dreaded French attack.15
New Hampshire, however, was unable to avoid the other half of the French and Indian menace. Even though the seacoast area of the province had been settled as early as 1623, Indians were still troublesome more than a hundred years later. In 1744 Samuel Lane, only five miles from Portsmouth, jotted down, "Many people Driven out of the Woods by Indians and people kept Garrison at Newmarket; Alarms Made often. Where I live, we heard Alarms often, & Horns Sounded on the other Side the River, and People much Distress'd by Indians." The following year occurred the siege of Louisbourg and the war on the frontier correspondingly heated up. Beginning in July, several incidents of hostility occurred near isolated settlements in western New Hampshire. At Great Meadow (later Westmoreland) on the Connecticut River William Phips, attacked while hoeing corn, shot one Indian and killed another with his hoe before three of their comrades killed him. This became a common occurrence. People huddled in garrison houses, afraid to work their fields, while Indians slaughtered their livestock. By 1746 the terror had moved eastward from the Connecticut to the Merrimack and in June Indians struck within twenty miles of Portsmouth at Rochester. Again, men working in a field were surprised and four were killed including one John Wentworth, a distant cousin of young John in Portsmouth.16 With the very real threat of invasions by a foreign power and kinsmen being tomahawked to death only a few miles away, a boy growing up in colonial New Hampshire did not have to rely on his imagination to occupy his mind. Life (and death) must
have held much meaning and maturity developed rapidly in eighteenth-century America.

But not all of a young man's time could be devoted to dreaming of places with romantic names or even considering the stark realities of a frontier that seemed almost too close. Most of his youth would be spent concerned with the abstractions demanded by schooling, especially if his family means and position dictated that he go to college as was the case with John Wentworth. We do not know where or from whom John received his early education, but a hint lies in a later statement when, as governor, he was praised as one whose "birth and education have been in the province." His parents were in a position to provide him with private tutors, but it seems just as plausible that he attended the small school house only a block and a half south of his home, particularly since Portsmouth as early as 1701 required a schoolmaster who could teach not only the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also "the tongues and other learning as may fit them for the colleged." John probably went off to school at about age five to learn his alphabet and to read the didactic rhyming epigrams and religious verses found in the master's hornbooks and primers. He also learned how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide and was taught to form his letters carefully so that his penmanship would be legible. This he must have taken to heart for his writing as an adult is large and easy to read, a characteristic not always common in the eighteenth century. Within two years a bright lad such as John had doubtless mastered the essentials and was ready to proceed to his secondary education.
College preparation usually took about seven years and consisted primarily of learning to read and write the classical languages, Latin and Greek, in order to meet college entrance requirements. Despite attempts by the eighteenth century to modernize the teaching of Latin, the regimen remained stiff and the language long a mystery to fledgling minds. Around the sixth year Greek was introduced, providing formidable new problems—a completely foreign alphabet with different rules of grammar and syntax. Fortunately the boys by that time had the experience of learning a strange language to bolster them, and it was common belief among the students that the masters had lower expectations for Greek than for Latin.

By the eighteenth century a host of new, practical studies, in keeping with the changing thought of the time, had been introduced into school curricula. In addition to Latin and Greek, John Wentworth was probably exposed to advanced mathematics, English grammar, navigation, surveying, geography, astronomy, and business skills such as bookkeeping and accounting. Modern languages were also considered an asset in the mercantile world of colonial America. As wealth increased and the importance of "polite society" became more apparent, even music and dancing became fit subjects for study. As an adult John Wentworth maintained a strong interest in the outdoors, especially in geography, topography, and surveying, providing reason to believe that his interest may have been kindled by exposure to these subjects while a schoolboy. Yet it must be remembered that John was preparing himself to pass
college entrance exams and at Harvard they cared little whether a boy had an ear for "polite" music or knew enough navigation to sign on as first mate on any vessel out of Boston or Portsmouth. College rules still required that applicants for admission be able to "read, construe and parse Tully, Virgil, or Such like common Classical Latin Authors . . . to write true Latin in Prose, and . . . verse, . . . and to read, construe and parse ordinary Greek."^19

Prospective freshmen at Harvard were examined by the President and tutors shortly before commencement which traditionally was held on a Wednesday in July. In 1751, before he was fourteen, John Wentworth and his schoolmaster must have decided that he had progressed far enough in his studies to present himself for admittance. The exams that year were scheduled for Friday and Saturday, the fifth and sixth of July. Wentworth has left us no account of his journey south to Cambridge, but we can gain some insight into the experience of a young man facing this crucial test from the remembrance of one of his future classmates, John Adams, who rode north from Braintree that same July. With his instructor ill and unable to go with him as planned, Adams was mortified at the thought of "introducing myself to such great Men as the President and fellows of a Colledge," and almost turned back. Nevertheless, he screwed up his courage and went through with it. During the examination Joseph Mayhew, tutor for the incoming freshman class, handed Adams a passage in English to be translated into Latin. John glanced at it and immediately saw some unfamiliar words. In that brief agonizing moment he
saw his future slip away and his father's hopes for him dashed with the expectation that he would not be admitted to venerable Harvard. But then Mayhew, motioning John to follow him, stepped into his study, pointed out paper and pen, a grammar book, and most importantly, a dictionary, and told the young man he could have as much time as he needed. With great relief Adams hurriedly set about his task. Whether John Wentworth was better prepared than his future friend from Braintree there is no way to know. We can be sure, however, that he took the same exam and that he performed adequately, for he was admitted to Harvard in the fall of 1751.

During the six-week vacation that followed Commencement the new freshmen were to return home and prepare an essay on a given topic to bring back with them when they returned late in August. There is no reason to think that John Wentworth, at the age of fourteen, was any more diligent that summer than John Adams who spent the time "not very profitably chiefly in reading Magazines and a British Apollo." What must have seemed the last fleeting moments of youth undoubtedly passed rapidly and soon John was headed back to Cambridge with items necessary for an extended stay such as bedding and eating utensils and whatever few important personal possessions a boy of fourteen might have accumulated.

Cambridge, on the Charles River west of Boston, was little more than a village of about 1500 souls, a few shops, and several taverns and churches. However, as the seat of the oldest college in America and until the second quarter of the eighteenth century one of only three colleges throughout
all the colonies, the importance of the town in the eyes of the colonists, especially New Englanders, was greatly disproportionate to its size. The governor of Massachusetts, his staff, and important members of the legislature not only visited annually, but took a strong interest in the welfare and development of the college. Deliberately modeled after the University at Cambridge in England, the most distinguished sons of New England had proceeded to Harvard for their education for well over a century. Founded in the Puritan age of the seventeenth century, Harvard's original purpose had been to provide an educated clergy. But in the more secular age of the eighteenth century, although the ministry was still the career choice of many students, college education was seen more and more as preparation for the professions of law and medicine or as an essential ingredient in the background of an increasingly wealthy New England mercantile class. Harvard was not an exclusive institution. Many sons of artisans and farmers, such as John Adams, were educated there, often with the aid of scholarships. Still, a majority of the students came from the upper levels of society, sons of ministers, magistrates, and merchants. John Wentworth, whose father had accumulated wealth in trade and whose uncle was a royal governor, was very much in his element at Cambridge. On entrance each class was ranked, not according to ability, but according to family social position, something always difficult to determine and the source more than once of protest and lingering bitterness. John Wentworth, at the age of fourteen one of the youngest members of the twenty-five in his class,
was placed fifth; John Adams fourteenth. This ranking was held until graduation and seniority in all intervening college activities, whether marching in procession or eating in commons, was determined by it.23

In the early autumn of 1751 John Wentworth, as have timeless generations of college freshmen beginning the break from home and immediate family, was assigned a room and a roommate. In his first year John lived with an upperclassman, Thomas Malbone, a senior from Newport, Rhode Island, described as "an ardent lover of literature and the arts, learned, wise, and pious above his years." Another senior who befriended Wentworth in his first year at college was Ammi Ruhamah Cutter of North Yarmouth, Maine. As was common practice, John probably attached himself to Cutter for protection from the unreasonable demands predictably made on freshmen by the sophomores and juniors. Cutter was apparently so favorably impressed by John and some other students he knew from Portsmouth that when he graduated at the end of the year he moved to that town to learn and practice medicine. He remained there and the friendship between the two young men flourished.24

Malbone and Wentworth roomed together in number 24, Massachusetts Hall, a four-story structure completed in 1720. Massachusetts was one of only four buildings that comprised the compact Harvard campus. Directly across the yard to the north stood the center of most activities at the college, old Harvard Hall, built in 1677 of brick and destroyed by fire in 1764. Three stories tall with an inset gambrel roof, its six large gables on either side gave it a definite "medieval"
appearance. Harvard contained the College Hall, scene of major lectures and convocations, and the library which, when it burned in 1764, contained some 5000 volumes including the original works donated by John Harvard. The building housed the kitchen and also the buttery which not only served as a commissary providing students with "paper and ink, tobacco, wine and cakes," but, since it was run by the steward who kept the college records, functioned as an administrative office. In addition, Harvard Hall contained a number of student rooms and studies. To the east, between Massachusetts and Harvard, completing a quadrangle that was open on the west, was Stoughton College or Hall, finished in 1699. Stoughton contained only student chambers and studies. The only other building in 1751 was Holden Chapel, north of Harvard Hall, completed in 1744 with funds obtained by Thomas Hutchinson (A.B. 1727) from the widow of the English Governor of the Russia Company, Samuel Holden.

Subject matter and modes of teaching at Harvard in mid-century were undergoing a very gradual change in an effort to keep abreast of enlightenment thought, but the general curriculum was not greatly different than that of the seventeenth century. Still of first importance were the classical languages, Latin and Greek, in both grammar and literature. The emphasis was on Greek and there actually was little further instruction in Latin. Much of the classroom recitation was conducted in Latin and a thorough knowledge of the language was assumed. Right methods of thinking were developed by the study of logic, metaphysics, and ethics. Rounding out the core curriculum were
natural philosophy (science which could range from physics and chemistry to geometry, meteorology, and biology), mathematics (usually geometry), and astronomy. In addition some study of divinity was required, not with the purpose of turning the undergraduates into ministers, but as part of the broad liberal arts background of all educated men which Harvard felt it was providing. Rhetoric, elocution, and English composition were stressed along with all subjects, especially as the eighteenth century wore on and instruction increasingly shifted from Latin to English. ^

There were four tutors at Harvard, each of whom was assigned to an incoming class to instruct its members in the whole range of subjects for the entire four years. By 1751 one of these men was already an institution, the venerable Henry Flynt (A.B. 1693) who had been a tutor for more than fifty years. Old Tutor Flynt, "the great college character of the century," had, as most tutors, taken his share of abuse from the students. They drank his wine, hid his wig, and put snakes in his room. But Flynt, a moderate man who enjoyed his glass of flip in the morning and cup of punch at night, inspired loyalty in his students by treating them fairly and defending them at faculty meetings. ^ The tutor assigned to John Wentworth's class in 1751, however, was not Henry Flynt but Joseph Mayhew. Mayhew had graduated from Harvard in 1730 and been a tutor since 1739. Like Flynt, he suffered the indignities that all tutors came to expect including "Heinous Insults" and threats of physical violence by drunken students. His brandy and beer were stolen, rocks thrown through his window,
and logs rolled down the stairs next to his study. There is no reason, though, to question his ability as a scholar and a teacher. One of his contemporaries praised him as "a man of superior abilities and learning." The class of John Wentworth and John Adams was to be Mayhew's last for he resigned in 1755 shortly after commencement.27

Not all instruction was carried on by the tutors. The more subtle and complicated points of theology were explicated by the Hollis Professor of Divinity, Edward Wigglesworth, while the most recent theories in the constantly changing field of eighteenth-century science were expounded by John Winthrop, Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.28 Wigglesworth, whose deafness, "small still voice," and slight lisp may have prevented him from acquiring a permanent pastorate, probably found in college teaching a vocation even more suitable to his temper and considerable talent. He possessed the qualities of all great teachers, depth and breadth of knowledge, "clearness and strength of argument," and a lack of dogmatism which allowed him to present conflicting views to stimulate the minds of his students. This occasionally brought criticism in still strongly Calvinistic New England, but Wigglesworth, a benevolent, tolerant man, remained sharply critical of religious narrowness. Typical was the observation he made to his students concerning the debate over Arminianism, that "the very weighty Considerations, which are offer'd on both sides of the Controversy ... should be a strong argument for mutual Charity, with those who differ in their Apprehensions concerning it." President Ezra Stiles of Yale called Wigglesworth
a "true Theological Genius." More important, at Harvard he was an intellectual gadfly whose cool, satirical lectures taught students to think before they believed.\textsuperscript{29}

John Winthrop also greatly influenced students' minds by infusing them with the orderliness and rationalism demanded by the rapidly expanding scientific thought of the eighteenth century. Known among the learned scientific circles and societies of Europe, Winthrop was the single scientist in the colonies who could be considered on a level with Benjamin Franklin. He too tempted Calvinist wrath by eschewing all explanations of physical phenomena that smacked of the medieval doctrine of divine intervention. He was a religious man, but he could not brook the simple-minded ascription of any remotely complicated occurrence of nature to providential causes. When New England was hit by an earthquake in 1755, Winthrop tried to raise his listeners above superstition and religiously inspired ignorance by explaining earth tremors as natural events that were at least partly beneficial and not "scourges in the hand of the Almighty" inflicted on a people for spiritual backsliding or any other reason. Winthrop demanded much of himself and of his students but, according to one, "had the happy talent of communicating his ideas in the easiest and most elegant manner, and making the most difficult matters plain." He was Harvard's single claim to fame during this period and it was a privilege for colonial students such as John Wentworth, isolated from the leading thinkers of Europe, to be exposed to such a penetrating, analytical mind.\textsuperscript{30}
Presiding over the professors, tutors, and students in the middle of the eighteenth century was Edward Holyoke, President of Harvard. A large man weighing 235 pounds, Ezra Stiles called Holyoke a man of "commanding presence"; the students referred to him as "Guts." Learned and worldly but not a great scholar, his administration has been described as one of "aggressive liberalism." The terms "aggressive" and "liberal" must be understood within the context of the eighteenth century, but there is a sense that the college in this period, though still definitely denominational, was characterized by a non-sectarian openness. This was not only important for students of other faiths such as John Wentworth, who had been brought up an Anglican, but contributed to a general sense of intellectual freedom that encouraged students to find their own truth in the world, whether in God or politics. Thus, Harvard could produce in the Class of 1755 (a class with the reputation as the most able since 1721), a man identified with the republican spirit of the future, John Adams, and another who through the most difficult times would adhere above all else to traditional order and authority, John Wentworth. 31

Whatever Wentworth's daily schedule had been at home, it was rigidly determined now that he was a freshman at college. He had to be up and dressed in time to make the six a.m. prayer service in Holden Chapel, which meant rising in the dark a good portion of the year. With the last Amen, John and his classmates trudged to the buttery hatch in old Harvard to get their breakfast. According to the laws of the college they were supposed to have a choice of coffee, tea,
chocolate, milk, or beer to wash down their biscuit, bread and
butter, all to be carried back and consumed in their chambers.
In reality the Steward rarely provided them with more than
biscuit, bread, and milk, causing the boys from time to time
to supplement this meagre fare with food and drink bought at
one of the local taverns. Classes began at eight and ran till
noon. At twelve the main meal of the day was served with
pudding and beer. The time until two o'clock was to be used
for recreation, followed by lectures or solitary studying in
the chambers until supper, a meal consisting invariably of
the remains of the meat from the earlier meal warmed over in
some kind of a "pie." There are certain timeless universals
among college students. One of those is a felt obligation to
complain about their board. In the eighteenth century those
complaints were well justified; the food was poorly prepared,
unwholesome, and unappetizing, and dining conditions often
unsanitary. One student called the food "dreadful" and said
that "we frequently had Puddings made of flower and Water and
boiled so hard as not to bee eatable we frequently threw them
out and kicked them about."32

One of the most common offenses for which students were
punished was tardiness to chapel or to lectures, or absence
from school altogether, often as a result of failure to return
after a vacation. Each student, if he lived within ten miles
of Cambridge, could go home four days each month. John
Wentworth did not qualify to go home on a monthly basis, but
he could take advantage of the provision allowing those outside
the ten mile radius to take a twenty-one day leave twice a year
to visit home. In the spring of his junior year, though, John did not bother to sign out when he left school. On March 30, 1754, the President and Trustees fined him "for going out of Town without Leav" and for an unauthorized absence of twelve days. He probably did not register his departure because he was not going home; it is unlikely that a lad of John's means was much concerned with the relatively paltry penalty of eighteen shillings nine pence. Spring fever may have sent him (and probably friends—his roommate William Warner, a senior from Portsmouth, was fined at the same time for absence) off on an adventure to explore previously unseen sights. It is possible that he went to visit his friend John Temple and mingle with some of Boston's socially prominent people at Temple's 500-acre estate, Ten Hills Farm, in Charlestown. More than likely, though, he went to the home of his uncle, Samuel Wentworth, a successful merchant in Boston. John was apparently a frequent visitor there while an undergraduate at Harvard.  

When John Adams later reflected on his college days and attempted to recall "several others, for whom I had a strong affection," Wentworth was the first name that came to his mind. When he listed "some better Schollars than myself," however, Wentworth's name was not mentioned. It is difficult to know what kind of a student John Wentworth was at Harvard. He was certainly intelligent enough to have done well in his studies. Later in life when he was in a position of responsibility and power, he went out of his way many times to promote education, especially higher education. He always maintained a strong curiosity, at times bordering on boyish enthusiasm, about the
outdoors and natural occurrences from seemingly exotic animals to unusual geological formations. It seems logical that this interest was developed, or at least heightened, by the lectures and experiments of Professor Winthrop, as was the case with his classmate Adams. Wentworth was an avid supporter of the project of his friend, the Reverend Jeremy Belknap, to write a history of New Hampshire, and was assiduous in collecting information, both natural and historical, for Belknap. As a boy John had been exposed to books in his father's home and as a college student, although he did not take it with him to Cambridge, had a library of his own. In 1755, after following up a request of his uncle Daniel Rindge to price certain books in a Boston book store, he wrote to Rindge, "I have most of them of my own at Portsmouth the use of which you may freely have, and as long as you please, in the Preceptor you'll find Fordyce's Mor[al] Philos[ophy] abridg'd. If you have a Mind to use any of my Books; my Uncle Wm. has the care of them and will lend them to you."

But against these indications that Wentworth, like his friend Adams, might have welcomed the opportunity provided by Harvard to expand and develop his intellectual awareness through serious study, we must place his own interpretation of college life during his junior year. Writing to his good friend, Ammi Ruhamah Cutter, by now a physician in Portsmouth, John lamented that "the observation you make of the great Variety of pleasing scenes we pass thro' is unjust, as it is now entirely chang'd from what it then was when your presence bless'd us." He went on to complain that "the College now is filled up (allmost) of
Boys from 11 to 14 Years old and they seem to be quite void of the Spirit & life which is a general concomitant of Youth, so you may Judge what kind of life I now live, who was won't to live in the gayest and most Jovial manner, when I was first admitted one of this Society which I then thought was a Compound of Mirth and Gaiety as it is now of Gravity."

Unfortunately, in Wentworth's eyes, serious scholarly discussions centering especially on religious dogma had become the rule "instead of the sprightly turns of Wit & Gay repartees which the former Companys used to have, which makes me cry out . . . Oh Alma Mater, how hast thou degenerated from thy Pristine Glory!" It may have been just a youthful pose of aloofness or his Anglican background or both that led Wentworth to make these statements and, later in the year, to invite Cutter to commencement "to celebrate my entrance upon the last year of my Pilgrimage among the Heathen." Whatever the cause, there is no reason to believe that John was not happy during his days at Harvard and we may agree with a recent historian's interpretation of his complaints as "arrogance which was entirely foreign to his nature."34

In 1754 John Wentworth, probably with more enthusiasm than he would admit, returned to Cambridge for his final college year. Discussion among the students that fall must have gone beyond the numerous college activities to include the rapidly changing situation of the British colonies in regard to their French neighbors. Since the end of King George's War in 1748 and the return to the status quo in North America, including the British Government's almost complacent return of Louisbourg,
for which New Englanders had sacrificed and struggled so dearly, to the French, it was apparent that it would be only a matter of time until another war would settle this Anglo-French contest for the continent once and for all. In 1752 the governor of Canada assumed a blatantly aggressive policy on the frontier. When Virginia's Governor Robert Dinwiddie sent a party under George Washington, a twenty-one year old militia colonel, to warn the French out of the Ohio country they refused to leave and emphasized their determination by constructing Fort Duquesne at the strategic confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. In July, 1754, Colonel Washington and his troops had been soundly defeated at hastily constructed Fort Necessity and sent packing back to Virginia with a message for Dinwiddie and the British Government that this territory was and would remain part of New France.

John Wentworth's concern with military and political developments during his senior year was undoubtedly increased by two factors. The Indians, egged on by the French, had again taken up the tomahawk and were conducting bloody raids on the New Hampshire frontier. Also, Wentworth's roommate that year, Theodore Atkinson, Jr., a cousin from Portsmouth, was the son of one of New Hampshire's delegates to the congress called in Albany in the summer of 1754 for the purpose of cementing an alliance between the English colonies and the powerful Iroquois tribes of the Six Nations. The Indians left Albany without making a commitment to support the British in the coming war, but the collection of representatives from seven colonies managed to make constructive use of their time
by drawing up a proposal for a union of the colonies deemed "absolutely necessary" for their survival. A number of different plans were put forth. Theodore Atkinson, Sr., supported that of Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts, but the one adopted by the congress to be suggested to the various colonial legislatures for approval was based on the ideas of Benjamin Franklin, the delegate from Pennsylvania. It made little difference, however, because the colonial assemblies, unwilling to sacrifice any of their own sovereignty to a centralized government, showed little interest in the Albany Plan of Union in spite of the increasingly ominous clouds of war.

From Boston during his winter vacation in January, 1755, Wentworth wrote to his uncle in Portsmouth that "We have a Rumor of War here, & Men are raising; but no one knows why as the Council & Representatives, have been sworn to secrecy." The Massachusetts legislature had probably received word of the two British regiments under the command of General Edward Braddock that had embarked for America to remove the French forcibly from the Ohio. This was not, however, a particularly well kept secret. France was well aware of England's intent and was raising a much larger force of her own. Wentworth reported that some of the local politicians were convinced there would be a war in the spring because "two Armies of Different Nations, and Interest, cannot live together without coming to Action." John was confident that if there were any news he would hear it "at my Uncles." But two months later when he wrote again to Daniel Rindge from Cambridge, he
had heard nothing further. Still, all anybody was talking about was war. Men were enlisting, there was a great deal of "noise," but who could tell if anything would come of it? John was fairly certain the conflict would come, but he had his own theory as to the tactics of the French. He told Rindge they might try to "evade" war "by Laying Bullets of Gold to the hands of those that shou'd annoy them with Bullets of Iron & Lead, Which yellow Balls properly applied have hitherto been found to be very usefull in turning the just resentment of their Neighbors. . . . Historians relate that Philip of Macedon, said when he was beseiging a City, that he was never afraid of being disappointed of taking it, provided he cou'd but introduce into it a Mule laden with Gold, (so great is the power of that Metal!) It seems from the Conduct of the French that they have adopted The Maxim of that Prince, tho' not his Bravery." John just hoped the French would not have the same success they had had in the past with the "dispersion of their Coins." Francis Parkman has told us that France at this point did wish to avoid war as long as possible, but it is not entirely clear who Wentworth thought they might be attempting to buy off.36

Not all of John's time during his last year of school was taken up with concern over possible British-French hostilities. In January he wrote to Daniel Rindge that in spite of ill-health he had gone to Boston "as I want to be at Schools, where I never can have another Opportunity of going." What these "schools" were is difficult to determine. We do know, however, that many young men, especially of John's
social position, felt it a necessity as budding gentlemen of polite society, to acquire certain refinements and skills that were not included in a Harvard education. In Boston, as in the other major colonial cities in eighteenth-century North America, there were a substantial number of private instructors who taught a variety of subjects from art and music to dancing and fencing. It is not unreasonable to presume that John was preparing himself for his return in the near future, as a full fledged member of the aristocratic society of the small but relatively cosmopolitan seaport of Portsmouth. That he had maintained his Anglican affinity throughout his four years in the Calvinist community of Cambridge, can be seen by his reference in the spring of 1755 to the "Heathenish and Popish Fast day" slated to be observed by his "Presbyterian Brethren in N. Hampshire." He wanted to make sure they were reminded of the scripture passage, "'many are the Afflictions of the righteous.'"

John Wentworth and his fellow seniors ended their classroom recitations in March but were required to remain on campus until their final exams had ended in June. These were followed by valedictories accompanied, in the time-honored manner of graduating seniors, by entertainment, revelling, "drunkedness and confusion." Harvard commencement, which fell on the sixteenth of July in 1755, was more than just a day for graduates and their parents. It was a festive occasion that came closer to being a regional celebration than any other holiday in New England. For several days before the ceremonies the roads were dusty and the ferries packed with people pouring
into Cambridge. The taverns and boarding houses overflowed. When commencement for a time was changed to Friday, the clergy as well as the public demanded that it be returned to Wednesday to ensure them time to get home and sober up for Sunday services. The atmosphere bordered on that of a carnival; tents were set up and "medicine men, acrobats and public entertainers" flocked to town. There were gambling and dancing and the consumption of watermelon, rum cake, and heroic quantities of licquor. After an evening of convivial chorusing by the seniors, graduation morning arrived clear with the July sun beating down unmercifully. In spite of this, much attention was paid by the commencers to their attire. Silver shoe buckles were brightly shined and most at least had a new pair of vividly colored silk stockings and a freshly powdered wig. By mid­morning everyone was in his place awaiting only the arrival of Governor Shirley and his escort. Once the Governor's entourage had assumed its proper position, the procession was off to the meeting house—bachelors first followed by the masters candidates, then the impressive figure of President Holyoke, the Corporation and tutors, and finally the Governor and Council. Some that wished to get in always had to be turned away. The meeting house was so crowded one year "that the Galleries were in danger of falling; and several Persons . . . jumped out at the Windows." The President gave his prayer and customary sermon, the scholars argued their prepared theses in Latin, and the degrees were conferred.  

Maintaining his aloof attitude, John Wentworth was noticeably unimpressed by this annual academic ritual. Upon
writing to a friend in June to invite him to commencement he declared, "I shall promise myself the Pleasure of your Company to see me perform a number of ridiculous Ceremonys, which Custom has render'd necessary if we intend to keep on good Terms with the World, & you know that is very necessary." In fact most of the seniors had more weighty matters on their minds than the activities of graduation day. Once the commencement dinner in Harvard Hall was over and final farewells had been said to close friends of the last four years, the new graduate had to have a good idea of where he was going to go and what his life's work was going to be. When John Adams, the son of a farmer, had begun his education at Harvard he had planned to become a minister true to his father's wishes. In the intervening period his developing talents seemed to indicate to him that he would be better fitted for the legal profession, but by commencement he was still undecided between law, medicine, or the clergy. As a result of his indecision and relative poverty (he could not think of asking his father, who had already sacrificed so much, for any more help) he chose to teach school for a time to feed and clothe himself and earn the fee that would be required by any lawyer who might later take him into his office as an apprentice.39

Adams' friend Wentworth did not share his problems or concerns. John's family had not had to save and sacrifice to send him to college. He had not been sent to Harvard to prepare for a profession to ensure that he would rise above his father's station in life. His father was a successful and wealthy merchant and there was no reason why John should not
follow in his footsteps. A college education was more or less expected of a young gentleman destined to be an active member of Portsmouth's small, largely mercantile, upper class. And one did not have to be a lawyer to take an active part in public affairs and politics. In fact the greater share of this responsibility was expected of and borne by men in commerce and trade. After all, had not John's uncle, Governor Benning Wentworth, been a merchant, and a bankrupt one at that, before coming to office? Thus John Wentworth had few worries as he bid his friends goodbye in Cambridge and readied his horse to carry him back to Portsmouth and an adult role in the society of a thriving colonial seaport.
NOTES

CHAPTER II


2 Wentworth, Genealogy, 1:320; Clark, Eastern Frontier, 294-95, 300-301.


7 Wentworth to John Pierce, February 7, 1795, Pierce Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, N.H.

8 On the Pierce family see the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 28(1874):369-70. Short sketches of John and Daniel Pierce are found in the Pierce Papers in the Portsmouth Athenaeum. See also "Daniel Pierce" in Sibley's Harvard Graduates 8:460-63.

9 Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, November 29, 1765, Masonian Papers, New Hampshire Archives, 3:36.


Enumerated items were those that under the British Navigation Acts, could be shipped only to England, Ireland, Scotland, or another English colony. Besides masts this list included such things as tobacco, sugar, indigo, molasses, and naval stores. It should be remembered that the commerce of Portsmouth, like that of all other colonial ports, was circumscribed by the Acts of Trade of the mother country. This did not mean, however, that the English laws were never broken as indeed they often were.


Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:283-84; Samuel Lane, Samuel Lane's Diary, A Journal for the Years, 1739-1803 (Concord, N.H., 1937), 65.

Lane, Diary, 66; Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:288-91.

Deposition of the town of Londonderry, New Hampshire, 1773, quoted in Benjamin F. Parker, History of Wolfeborough (Wolfeborough, N.H., 1901), 68.

Brewster, Rambles About Portsmouth, 1:79-82.


22. Bowen, Adams, 64.


27. Sibley's Harvard Graduates 8:730-34.

28. The chair of divinity was established in 1721 and that of natural philosophy in 1727 with money donated by an Englishman, Thomas Hollis. Hollis, who in addition to these gifts provided funds for scholarships, scientific apparatus, and other needs, can well be described as one of Harvard's greatest benefactors.


Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:310-12; Sibley's Harvard Graduates 6:228.

Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, January 27, April 4, 1755, Masonian Papers, 3:1, 7; Francis Parkman, Montcalm and Wolfe (New York, 1962 /18847), 139-40, 142.

Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, January 27, April 4, 1755, Masonian Papers, 3:1, 7; Cremin, American Education, 537-40; Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness (New York, 1971 /19387), 443-45.

Morison, Three Centuries, 119-32. No diplomas were given until the nineteenth century.

Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, June 24, 1755, Masonian Papers, 3:8; Adams, Diary, 3:263.
CHAPTER III

THE MAKING OF A GENTLEMAN MERCHANT:
PORTSMOUTH 1755-1763

John Wentworth, at the age of eighteen and about to embark on a career, had as good a college education as a young man could acquire without leaving the English colonies. Now it was time for a more practical education. John had inherited a place in the small Portsmouth "aristocracy," but as in most colonial cities, this was not an idle class. It was built on hard work, shrewd commercial sense, activity in political affairs, and knowing the right people. John thus entered his father's business with much to learn about bills of lading, shipping manifests, the best prospects for the highest percentage of profits, how to make up a cargo, buy into a ship, and choose a captain, and who and who not to trade with. It also took capital to become a trader in your own right and this was something that John, even though his father possessed great wealth, would have to work to accumulate. The sums required for a trading investment were substantial. Late in 1757 John wrote to Daniel Rindge that although his fortune had reached £600 he would have to wait one more year "before I can reach to the moderate height of 1/20 of a lumber laden Ship; & perhaps then not be able." So he lived at home and worked for his father, making an effort to learn the business while at the same time building up a reserve of cash with which to make trading investments of his own.
During the years immediately following college, Wentworth kept up a regular correspondence with his old classmate, John Adams. Adams was serving an apprenticeship of his own in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the law office of James Putnam while continuing to support himself by teaching school. Having recently been exposed to the theorizing mind of John Winthrop at Harvard, they undoubtedly exchanged accounts and conjectured on possible causes of the severe earthquake that shook all of New England in the early morning hours of 18 November, 1755. This was one of a series of shocks on both sides of the Atlantic and was related to the tremor that had destroyed the city of Lisbon on November first. Adams, in Braintree at the time, was convinced that his father's house was going to crash down on top of the entire family, and in Portsmouth great swells caused ships to be tossed about on the tidal river like toys in a child's bath. Adams valued highly Wentworth's friendship and his stimulating missives from New Hampshire. Replying to one of these in 1758 he wrote to his friend, "dear Jack," that "I should have forgotten that I had a mind and that there is a Temple of Knowledge, if your letters and the letters of Some other Friends, did not recall them sometimes to my memory." Adams also clearly enjoyed his friend's compliments in spite of his claim that "when I first read your Letter I resolved very nearly to drop the correspondence." He went on to explain that his "Vanity could not bear to be feasted with such a variety of the greatest delicacies, by a Friend whom poverty disables me to entertain with any better fare, than lean beef and Small Beer." On a second Reflection,
however, I found my naughty appetite so keen for your Dainties, that Vanity and Envy must go a foot." Later in the year he implored Wentworth to continue his letters, "which always raise a full Gale of Love, sometimes almost a Tempest of Emulation and some times a Breeze of Envy." Nevertheless, as happens so often with college acquaintances, time, distance, and more pressing obligations took their toll. The friendship remained but the close correspondence began to wane.²

In July, 1758, John had an opportunity to see Adams and most of his other classmates again as they returned to Cambridge to take their Master's degrees. This commencement also marked the graduation of his brother, Thomas, who, as class orator, had delivered the Valedictory of the Class of '58. The M.A. at Harvard was generally considered a formality that followed "in course" three years after graduation. Almost the only ones who remained in residence during this period were those studying for the ministry. For others the degree was supposedly related to the profession or career they had been pursuing and may or may not have involved any study. Nevertheless, to actually receive the degree the candidate had to be present on commencement day and be prepared to argue, either affirmatively or in the negative, a Quaestione which was printed with others on a Quaestio Sheet for the afternoon ceremonies. John Adams, as we might expect, in line with his growing interest in law, government, and politics, took the affirmative of the question, "Is Civil Government absolutely necessary for Men?" Here also occurs our first indication of John Wentworth's concern with public affairs and political theory. For his M.A. he argued
against the idea that the status of the citizen and the authority of the state were completely dependent on the whims of the rulers. Not a radical proposition in the mid-eighteenth century, its deference toward the rule of law had a decidedly whiggish tone.\(^3\)

Now with two college degrees Wentworth, at the age of twenty-two and a scion of New Hampshire's most prominent family, made a move to acquire one of the requisites of all established gentlemen. Although he felt he did not have enough capital to buy into a trading venture on his own he could, merely by knowing the right people, become a landowner. Virgin land was a plentiful commodity in New Hampshire in the 1750's when the frontier still began not many miles from the seacoast. In 1749 John's uncle, Governor Benning Wentworth, had begun making grants almost as far west as the Hudson River. But John did not have to go that far afield for his land and knew a source even closer than his uncle to which to turn. In 1622 Captain John Mason had received a patent from the Plymouth Company in England for a tract of land that would eventually become that part of New Hampshire extending from the sea sixty miles into the interior. When Mason died in 1635 his title fell into dispute and over the course of the next century the family lost control of the land. In the 1730's, however, a descendant, John Tufton Mason, revived the Mason Claim. John Thomlinson, New Hampshire's agent in London, seeing the advantages for the Province, convinced Mason to agree to sell his claim to New Hampshire for £1000 as soon as complete separation from Massachusetts was assured. In 1741 Benning Wentworth became
the first separate governor of New Hampshire, but the legislature was not apprized of the agreement with Mason until three years later, and then it was slow to act. Despite continued urgings by the Governor and Council to vote for ratification, the Assembly procrastinated. Mason threatened to sell the title to others if the legislators were not interested. In July, 1746, the legislature finally voted to buy Mason's claim with the stipulation that the Assembly have granting power over the lands involved. This incurred a dispute with the Governor and Council who claimed that under the commissions and instructions from the Crown, only they had lawful power to dispose of lands. It made little difference, though, for the day following the Assembly's vote, Mason sold his claim to twelve private persons for £500 more than the legislature was going to pay him.

The purchasers, known as the Masonian Proprietors, were among the most powerful and wealthy men in the province, including John Wentworth's father, Mark Hunking Wentworth. They now controlled a vast portion of land, roughly half the area of what would eventually fall within the borders of New Hampshire. The boundaries of their land corresponded closely to those of the original grant to Captain Mason which "gave him the lands contained within a line following up the Merrimack, and then westward to a point sixty miles from the sea, a line up the Piscataqua, and then northwestward to a point sixty miles from the sea," connected by what "was always generally understood to be a curved line everywhere distant sixty miles from the sea."4 The fact that the twelve Masonian Proprietors had seemingly stolen from under the nose of the legislature all
New Hampshire land not previously granted within sixty miles of Portsmouth angered more than a few people. The Governor himself was so incensed that in 1751, when four vacancies opened up on the Council, he sent a list of persons to London that he did not want appointed to the positions. Among the names was that of his own brother, Mark Hunking Wentworth, who did not gain a Councillor's seat for eight more years. But the new owners argued that the Assembly had had its chance and to show that they had the interest of the people in mind, they relinquished claim to lands within the tract that were already occupied. At least the issue had been settled and the transaction was soon accepted, if not applauded, by most people.

The proprietors soon began attempts to settle their lands and within the next forty years they established thirty-seven new towns.⁵

At one of the regular meetings of the Masonian Proprietors, on October 5, 1759, at James Stoodly's tavern in Portsmouth, discussion centered around a recent application by "sundry young Gentlemen" of the seaport for a grant of land. Henry Apthorp, William Treadwell, Dr. Ammi Ruhamah Cutter, John Wentworth's friend from Harvard, and David Sewall, a member of Wentworth's college class, had hoped to become proprietors of a new town in New Hampshire. Their bid was successful. They received a six-square-mile tract of land at the southeast corner of Lake Winnipesaukee, some forty-five miles northwest of the capital. The Masonian Proprietors applied their usual terms to the grant. They charged no fee and demanded no quit rent but stipulated that a portion of
each new town, in this case one quarter, be reserved for themselves. This was how they expected to obtain a return on their investment; as each town gained settlers and prospered, their own land would correspondingly increase in value. This land was exempt from taxation until actually improved. Within their own section one lot was reserved for the first minister, one for other ministers, and one for a school. The grantees were expected to have ten families settled in their part of the town within three years after the end of the current war. Although by the end of 1759 it looked as if the French were going to be soundly beaten, no one expected yeomen to test the New Hampshire frontier until a peace had actually been signed. Within eight years there were to be forty families on the land, a church, and passable roads. Unless good cause could be shown why these conditions had not been met, title would revert to the original proprietors who would then be free to regrant the land. Three weeks after receiving the grant, Cutter, Sewall, Apthorp, and Treadwell admitted twenty-one associates to their proprietorship, among them John Wentworth and his brother Thomas, now also back in Portsmouth after graduating from Harvard. On November 14, the twenty-four fledgling proprietors met at John Stavers' inn and voted to name their town Wolfeboro, after the great British hero, General Wolfe, who had died in the decisive victory at Quebec earlier that year. John Wentworth, with no sacrifice in what he considered his slowly accruing personal fortune, was now a landowner, something that carried not only a certain amount of prestige but also the very real possibility of future profits.6
One of the excuses accepted from either proprietors or settlers for not meeting the requirements of their grants within the specified time was interference by Indians, which had become commonplace on the frontier of New Hampshire since the opening of hostilities between the French and British in 1755. Just one week before Wentworth's graduation from Harvard, his speculation that war was near was borne out when General Braddock with his British troops and American volunteers marched into an ambush of French and Indians near Fort Duquesne on the Monongahela River. The ensuing Battle of the Wilderness, in which Braddock lost his life and Colonel George Washington led the retreat, marked the overt beginning of the last struggle between two empires for the North American continent. In that same year an expedition, including two New Hampshire regiments, sent against the French fortress at Crown Point merely provoked the Indians in Canada to resume their acts of terror on the New Hampshire frontier. Property was destroyed, people murdered, and prisoners carried off as settlers found themselves in a constant state of siege. In 1756 another regiment was raised in New Hampshire and its commander, Colonel Nathaniel Meserve, was placed in charge of Fort Edward on the Hudson just below Lake George. Wentworth's friend, Dr. Cutter, served with the regiment at Fort Edward and when Lord Loudoun, impressed with the special capabilities of the New Hampshire soldiers, formed them into bodies of rangers to reconnoiter the enemy in the woods, gather intelligence, and perform special missions, Cutter was appointed surgeon of the group placed under the command of Major Robert Rogers.
John Wentworth must have been well supplied with the latest military intelligence during Cutter's occasional visits to Portsmouth. Unfortunately the news was not very good. Fort Oswego was lost to the French in August, 1756, and a year later Montcalm captured Fort William Henry. Adding to the increasing consternation of English colonists was the fact that Montcalm had been unable to restrain his Indian allies from savagely attacking the unarmed soldiers whom he had granted safe passage to Fort Edward. New Hampshire lost eighty men out of its regiment of two hundred in this bloody debacle. Dr. Cutter was fortunate not to have been among them. He had sailed to Canada where, in September, a British attempt to take Louisbourg was foiled by the French navy and a hurricane that scattered the English fleet. The following spring another force was dispatched to Louisbourg including Dr. Cutter and more than a hundred carpenters from New Hampshire under the command of Nathaniel Meserve. This time the enemy was smallpox. Many died, including Meserve and his son. Cutter contracted the disease while treating others and nearly fell victim to it himself. John Adams wrote to Wentworth in April, 1758, that his thoughts were on the war. English fortunes in North America indeed seemed extremely bleak.

But changes were in the wind. The indomitable William Pitt had taken command in England and was devoting all his energy to a strategy designed to defeat the French. In July, in spite of the smallpox, the British forces under Generals Amherst and Wolfe recaptured Louisbourg. A month later Fort Frontenac fell and the French finally were driven
from Fort Duquesne. In 1759 there was a growing sense of relief and optimism in Portsmouth as reports of Amherst's succeeding victories—Niagara, Crown Point, Ticonderoga—reached the seaport. When news arrived in October of the fall of the French capital of Quebec the town broke out in a general celebration marked by the firing of cannon and fireworks, a bonfire, and a parade. The English victory, which marked virtually the end of French influence and thus Indian depredations on New Hampshire's borders, must have been especially pleasing to those such as Dr. Cutter who had served so faithfully in the cause. It was also good news to settlers who now could head west and north to make a new start on virgin land of their own, and to men like John Wentworth who held western lands and had a strong interest in developing them.7

The war had been on everyone's mind but it had not impeded development in Portsmouth since John's return from college. The prosperity of the mercantile class continued to show itself in the construction of increasingly elegant Georgian homes. The town built several new public buildings including an almshouse and a badly needed jail. The provincial legislature had never had a place of its own to meet. The Assembly normally gathered in one of several public houses while the Council, after 1750, conducted its business in a specially furnished chamber at Governor Benning Wentworth's Little Harbor mansion. Finally convinced that any provincial capital worth its salt should have a dignified home for the government, the House of Representatives in 1758 voted to build a statehouse. The result was a frame structure eighty feet by
thirty and two stories tall, the upper one divided into three chambers to house the Assembly, the Council, and the courts. At a much later date George Washington would call it "one of the best he had seen anywhere in the United States."

Although to inhabitants of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, Portsmouth must have seemed perilously close to the barbarous frontier of the north and east, the New Hampshire capital had begun to enjoy some semblance of a cultural and intellectual awakening. From what we know of John Wentworth, his father Mark Hunking, and his friend Dr. Cutter, most of the Portsmouth gentry probably had libraries of their own. Nevertheless, in 1750, apparently inspired by Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Library Company and a similar venture in Newport, thirty-four gentlemen of the town subscribed £936 for the formation of a "Library Society." This was seen as a necessity "As the Advancement of Learning and the Increase of all useful Knowledge is of great Importance both to the Civil and Religious Welfare of a People and as all Gentlemen who have any Taste for polite Literature or desire to have any Acquaintance with the various Affairs of Mankind, ... cannot but look upon it to be a great Privilege to have always a good Collection of Books at hand." Despite the subscribers' eclectic goals, "polite literature" and that dealing with the "affairs of Mankind" remained strictly secondary to theological material, especially of an Anglican nature.

More important for the growing sense of cosmopolitan awareness in Portsmouth during this period was the establishment in 1756 of a printing press, newspaper, and book shop by a
Boston native, Daniel Fowle. The New Hampshire Gazette, first printed in October, was the small province's first newspaper and probably did more than any other one thing to break down the narrow insularity of this budding, but still isolated, society on the edge of the wilderness. The sense of communication provided by a newspaper should not be underestimated. It not only was the vehicle for the diffusion of news, ideas, and culture, but gave New Hampshire residents a sense of belonging to a larger community, especially in relation to the other American colonies, but also to England and Europe. This was particularly important, as emphasized by an anonymous contributor to one of the first issues of the Gazette, in an area characterized by a "Prevalance of Ignorance" and "People that have no Acquaintance with any thing beyond the narrow Limits of the Family or Parish where they were born." In addition to printing his newspaper once a week and publishing numerous pamphlets and books, Fowle broadened the reading taste of the public by offering for sale works by Bunyan, Locke, Addison, Shakespeare, and many classical authors, along with books on such diverse subjects as medicine, shipbuilding, architecture, and navigation. Another sign of Portsmouth's growing importance and interest in the outside world came in 1761 when John Stavers began running a weekly stage to Boston, the first operated north of that city. Passengers could board the coach at Stavers' Earl of Halifax Inn early Tuesday morning, conduct their business in Boston, and be back in Portsmouth in time for Friday night dinner.
Another kind of stage was involved the following year when a group of Portsmouth citizens petitioned the governor to allow the erection of a playhouse that had been proposed by some actors from New York and Newport. John Wentworth was one of the signers, along with a number of other young men including his brother Thomas, his cousin and friend Theodore Atkinson, Jr., and John Fisher who married John's younger sister, Anna. They were convinced that the dramatists would "act no obscene or immoral plays, but such as tend to the improvement of the mind and informing the judgment in things proper to be known." But Portsmouth, although it was showing signs of increasing sophistication, was not ready for a theater. A counter petition expressed the fear that "sundry entertainments of the stage . . . would be of very pernicious consequences, to the morals of the young people, (even if there should be no immoral exhibitions) by dissipating their minds, and giving them an idle turn of attachment to pleasure and amusement." Indicating a definite generation gap, Mark Hunking Wentworth was among a number of the town's most established citizens who signed another protest against such a useless frivolity as a playhouse. Instead of emphasizing the moral aspects of the situation they turned to some more immediately practical considerations. In 1761 a severe drought had not only led to forest fires that destroyed a large section of timber land in New Hampshire and southern Maine, but also resulted in a serious shortage of food during the following year. Samuel Lane of Stratham called it the "Most Remarkable" year he could remember, the only thing saving many people from starvation being shiploads of grain.
brought in from other colonies. During these difficult times opponents of the playhouse felt that people encountered enough trouble just paying their taxes and buying food without being tempted to squander what little they had on worthless amusements. Accordingly, the House of Representatives voted to request the governor "to discountenance and deny" any proposals for a theater. John Wentworth and the other young people of Portsmouth would have to seek their entertainment elsewhere.

John's membership in St. John's Masonic Lodge consumed some of his spare time. Meeting regularly at Stavers' Inn, the Lodge provided a good chance for a young merchant like John Wentworth to fraternize socially with some of the older, more established businessmen of Portsmouth. Any interruption of the weekly ritual was not welcomed but was born with patience when the circumstances were unavoidable. In December, 1757, John wrote to Daniel Rindge that "Mrs. Stavers lies dead in the house of John her Husband, who, by her being there is impeded from vending his Punch, he therefore determined to put her under ground this afternoon or tomorrow, . . . & then I suppose we may again assume our Lodge, that, Since last Wednesday, has been cover'd with the Show of Sorrow."

John had now reached an age and a position in the community which dictated marriage and a family as his next logical step. In November, 1761, his younger brother, Thomas, who had taken his M.A. at Harvard that summer and returned also to work in his father's business, had married Anne Tasker, the daughter of a Marblehead judge. For her son and daughter-in-law and their prospective family, Mrs. Mark Hunking Wentworth
generously had a magnificent Georgian home built directly on the Portsmouth waterfront. Every attention was paid to detail from the large raised quoins at the corners and dentil molding under the roof, to the finely carved scroll pediment over the doorway and the unusual block front meant to simulate stone construction. Even more elaborate was the interior which took fourteen months to complete. The house, which has been termed one of the finest examples of Georgian frame architecture in America, was truly a representative symbol of the Wentworths' wealth and indicative of the grandeur they strove for in the essentially simple trading community of Portsmouth. John undoubtedly would have been provided with an equally fine dwelling had he chosen to marry at this time, but he did not. There seems to be no physical explanation; from his portraits we can see that he was an uncommonly handsome man. It is difficult to judge the validity of a report that a romance was budding between John and his cousin, Frances Wentworth, daughter of his uncle Samuel in Boston, but in May, 1762, she married their mutual cousin, Theodore Atkinson, Jr., before she was seventeen years old. John had no doubt known her as a child when he frequented his uncle's house while a student at Harvard. If there was in fact any early affection between the two, he may have thought her too young to marry in 1762, or more likely, at the age of twenty-four he valued his independence too highly to be tied down with family responsibilities.¹¹

John remained occupied by his business activities and the increasing demands made on him as one of the Wolfeboro proprietors. By 1762 a peace was assured and the frontiers
would again be habitable. In April Wentworth, Paul March, and Ammi R. Cutter at a meeting of the proprietors at Staver's inn were chosen a committee to get the development of Wolfeboro under way. They were authorized to proffer up to a thousand acres as an inducement for five families to settle in the town. Nevertheless, by 1764 not one family had yet settled in Wolfeboro. But by that time more pressing concerns had drawn John Wentworth's attention and required his presence outside the province.

In November, 1761, Captain Samuel Willis of Connecticut rode into Portsmouth to see John's uncle, Benning Wentworth. Willis, an emissary for Jared Ingersoll, came armed with a mast contract from the Navy Board procured by Ingersoll during his recent mission to London as Connecticut's agent. Willis also carried a request for Wentworth, as Surveyor General of the King's Woods, to have appropriate trees marked for felling, in particular along the upper valley of the Connecticut River from about Deerfield in Massachusetts northward through that wilderness region claimed by New Hampshire on both sides of the river. It was immediately clear to Governor Wentworth that here was a serious challenge to his control and his family's dominance of the lucrative New England mast trade. All licenses for cutting masts had to come from the Surveyor General and, since Mark Hunking Wentworth had been the primary mast agent in New England, masting had become pretty much a Wentworth family affair. By the early 1760's the forests along the Piscataqua and near the New Hampshire and lower Maine coasts were beginning to recede under the persistent swing
of the woodsman's axe, thus leaving the best mast trees further east in Maine and, of special interest to the Wentworths because New Hampshire claimed this territory, to the west along the Connecticut River, a region said to contain some of the finest virgin white pine timber in North America. The presumptuous Jared Ingersoll and his loggers now proposed to invade this Wentworth preserve.

Ingersoll's objective by tapping this resource was to wrest the mast business from Wentworth control and provide Connecticut with an exportable staple commodity that would serve to keep badly needed specie in the colony. To do this he would divert the flow of mast pines from Portsmouth by cutting them on the Connecticut River and floating them downstream to be shipped out of the Connecticut port of New London. An important part of this scheme was the establishment of a separate vice-admiralty court for Connecticut which currently was under the jurisdiction of a court including New York and New Jersey and located in New York. All depradations against the King's reserved timber were prosecuted in the vice-admiralty courts. An exclusive Connecticut court, or a deputy judgeship for Ingersoll for Connecticut, would discourage the ever occurring illicit cutting of royal timber, protect the contractor's masting agents from the hostility of settlers who considered the trees their own, and, most important, serve as a foil against the tremendous influence of the Wentworths that was sure to be leveled against them.
Since Ingersoll possessed an official mast contract from the Navy, Benning Wentworth had no choice but to grant him the license needed to cut trees. But now aware of the danger, the Wentworths were not about to let this threat to their dominance of New England's forests go unchallenged. Early in 1763 Ingersoll's agents who were in the process of collecting the logs for shipment, were harassed by a Colonel Symes who claimed to be a deputy of the Surveyor General but who later admitted that Mark Hunking Wentworth had sent him. Symes proceeded to measure the smaller sticks leading the agents to fear that the Wentworths were going to inform the Navy Board that not only were Ingersoll's masts inferior and not up to contract size, but that many small trees had been illegally cut. In July Governor Wentworth wrote to Governor Thomas Fitch of Connecticut complaining of the tremendous waste that was taking place in the forests by people who were transporting the timber to Connecticut, and demanding of Fitch protection for his deputies as they proceeded against the offenders. On the eighteenth of October Wentworth sent a recommendation to the Board of Trade for a single vice-admiralty judge with jurisdiction over the forests in all the colonies. A friendly superior judge would nullify for the Wentworths any threat posed by a separate Connecticut court under the influence of Ingersoll.\(^{13}\)

In addition to taking these measures the Wentworths must have thought it logical, in light of the ailing condition of their faithful agent John Thomlinson, to have an effective representative in London to protect their interests and advance
their cause at all the proper agencies. It would have to be someone fully knowledgeable of the family business and the current situation, someone who would be completely dependable. Because this representative would have to meet persons of influence in government circles he must appear competent but not overbearing. Above all, in an age so dependent on appearances, he should leave a positive impression of the Wentworths with whomever he spoke. Since a close member of the family would be best, the only logical choice was twenty-six year old John Wentworth. Besides having the best possible American education and experience in the small social world of Portsmouth behind him, he had worked in his father's business for the previous eight years and knew exactly what family interests had to be guarded. So in the autumn of 1763 John prepared to make his first trip abroad.

The threat to the Wentworth mast trade, however, was not the only factor sending John Wentworth to England for the first time. By 1763 there were indications that Benning Wentworth, who had already served longer than any other English governor in America, might not hold his office much longer. He was getting old and recurrent sieges of gout kept him immobilized for months at a time at his home at Little Harbor. The fact that his major source of influence with the home government, agent John Thomlinson, was also "Broken Down & Past his Labour" and forced to stay away from London much of the time did not help his political fortunes. In 1761 a friend in London wrote to the province Secretary, Theodore Atkinson, that upon seeing an address from the New Hampshire Assembly
Lord Bute, the confidant of the new king, had asked "if their was Noe Govr in the Province." Atkinson, who had been trying to have his office transferred to his son, Theodore, Jr., was worried enough about Wentworth's future in 1762 to urge Thomlinson to push the affair through as speedily as possible before it could be blocked by a new governor. Benning Wentworth's old enemy from New Hampshire, John Huske, now residing in England, gained a powerful ally in 1763 when his political patron Charles Townshend was placed at the head of the Board of Trade. Of even more significance that year was the move by the Board of Trade, after persistent urgings by the governors of New York, to open hearings into the dispute between New York and New Hampshire over that land west of the Connecticut River that would later become Vermont. Since 1749 Benning Wentworth, under the bold assumption that New Hampshire jurisdiction carried to within twenty miles of the Hudson River, had been making grants in the region and had accumulated thousands of acres there himself. To make matters worse, since Governor Wentworth had taken his young housekeeper for his wife in 1760, nasty rumors had circulated in London that he "had Maried a Dirty Slute of a Maid."\textsuperscript{14} Thus by 1763 there was indeed cause for concern among the Wentworths, not only for their mast business, but more important for the political hegemony they had maintained in New Hampshire since Benning Wentworth became governor in 1741. It was doubly important that they have someone in England during this crucial period.

Yet these very pressing, practical considerations may not entirely account for John Wentworth's departure for England.
Overseeing family affairs probably provided John with an excellent excuse to make the trip abroad, and it seems safe to assume that he eagerly volunteered for the assignment. Just as the "grand tour" on the continent added the finishing touches to the education of young English gentlemen, a trip to England did much the same for young men of standing in the colonies. This was particularly true in the South where planters often fashioned a self-image based on the English squirearchy, but it was also prevalent in other regions among the wealthier classes. John Wentworth had all the advantages of his position: two degrees from Harvard plus an honorary M.A. from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) awarded in 1763, private instruction in certain amenities considered too frivolous to be taught at Harvard but deemed necessary by persons the rank of the Wentworths, and an exposure to as much social life as the mercantile elite of Portsmouth could muster. He lacked only a sojourn within English aristocratic society to become a complete, well-rounded, cosmopolitan gentleman. He would now fill that void in his background.

Late in October, 1763, the elder Theodore Atkinson sat down to pen a note to John Thomlinson and Barlow Trecottick concerning his account with their mercantile establishment in London. "My kinsman John Wentworth," he wrote, "by whom you will receive this is taking a Trip to England. I know I need not recommend him to your House. Youl finde him deserving every Favour granted." Supplied with all the necessary letters of recommendation, John soon departed from Portsmouth on what must have seemed, to a young man from New Hampshire, a very exciting adventure.
NOTES

CHAPTER III

1 Nathaniel Adams, Annals of Portsmouth (Hampton, N.H., 1971/18257), 255; Masonian Papers, New Hampshire Archives, 3:11. I have assumed that he lived at home since his name is not found in the Portsmouth tax lists for those years. There is a John Wentworth, Esq., listed in a different section of town from that of Mark H. Wentworth, but this I believe to be John's uncle, one of his father's brothers. The title of Esq. was in the eighteenth century most often associated with court justices. This John Wentworth served both as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and Judge of Probate. (New Hampshire Town Records, New Hampshire State Library, Vol. 16; H. L. Mencken, The American Language /4th ed.; New York, 1937, 278; John Wentworth, The Wentworth Genealogy /Boston, 1878, 1:305.) Also, it would have been unusual for a single man of John's age to set up housekeeping by himself in the eighteenth century. His father had a large home and, for that time, a small family and there is no reason to think that John would not have lived there until he married or left Portsmouth.


4 Otis G. Hammond, "The Mason Title and its Relations to New Hampshire and Massachusetts," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 26(1916):261. When the border was finally drawn between the two provinces in 1741, Massachusetts gained a line three miles north of the Merrimack. At the time of the Masonian purchase (1746) New Hampshire's other boundaries were not defined, leading to a dispute with New York over land west of the Connecticut River.


12N.H. Town Records, NHSL, 1:12; Parker, Wolfeborough, 19-20.

13Lawrence Henry Gipson, American Loyalist: Jared Ingersoll (New Haven, 1971 /1920/), 79-110.

15 William L. Sachse, The Colonial American in Britain (Madison, Wis., 1956), 39-40; NHSP 18:556-58. We do not know the circumstances surrounding Wentworth's honorary M.A., but Princeton would grant a degree, with the phrase Honoris causa inserted, to anyone holding the same degree from another college. (See John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey / Philadelphia, 1877, 1:210.) Since Wentworth already held a Harvard M.A., there were no further requirements. I am indebted for this information to Earle E. Coleman, University Archivist, Princeton University.
CHAPTER IV

SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND A FORTUNATE ACQUAINTANCE:
ENGLAND, 1763-1765

A transatlantic voyage was not a light undertaking at any time during the colonial period. Given the hazards and rigors involved, it is remarkable how many and how often Americans made the trip "home" to England. Reports of the crossing were enough to deter some completely; fear of the sea led Benjamin Franklin's wife to adamantly refuse his entreaties to accompany him to London. In 1766 William Samuel Johnson of Connecticut wrote back from London that sight of the British capital was not worth the shipboard experience required to attain it.

Conditions and the time required for passage had not changed appreciably since the early seventeenth century when Englishmen first began to venture across the ocean in any numbers. Accommodations below deck were often extremely primitive and even if the passenger purchased a separate cabin, as no doubt John Wentworth did, it would be cramped and he would still be subject to the many dangers of the voyage. Food often turned rotten and wormy and water bad before land was sighted. Sanitation was a constant problem and the prevalence of illness, ranging from seasickness to dysentery and smallpox, was common. If fevers and agues did not overtake the traveler, heavy seas, slack winds, pirates, or warships of enemy nations might. Very occasionally the trip could be made in as short a time as three weeks, but at least one voyage took twenty-four weeks during
which most of the passengers died. Four weeks was considered fast, the average crossing took somewhere between one and two months. Embarking on the turbulent North Atlantic in the winter took special courage, but this did not deter John Wentworth who probably took advantage of a departing mast ship. Running regularly, these "masters" normally carried passengers and mail between the colonies and England. John's destination was London, but his likely disembarkation point was, fittingly, Portsmouth on the south coast where the masts would be unloaded at the great naval shipyard. From there he would travel overland by coach or horse to London.

On his arrival in the metropolis in December, 1763, John's first order of business was to seek out the firm of Thomlinson and Trecothick and present his papers. John Thomlinson, senior partner and New Hampshire agent, had been ill for several years and spent little time in the city, so the chances are not great that Wentworth found him in. Thomlinson's son, John, who had been appointed joint agent with his father in February, was also in poor health. John Wentworth thus probably dealt with Barlow Trecothick, Thomlinson's business partner who was an active and influential London merchant and to whom he had a letter of introduction from Theodore Atkinson. Trecothick no doubt quickly took John under his wing, extending him the hospitality and "favours" requested by Atkinson. His first need would be suitable lodgings. Once that was taken care of, his next immediate requirement, to satisfy the inevitable curiosity of a visitor from the colonies on his first trip to London, would be a tour of the great city.
John Wentworth doubtless considered himself cosmopolitan and urbane by colonial standards. Nevertheless, having spent most of his short life in a town of fewer than 4500 persons on the edge of the North American forests, he must have been truly astounded by the sights and sounds of London. Little more than a year earlier a young Scotsman by the name of James Boswell had exclaimed on his second trip to the city: "The noise, the crowd, the glare of shops and signs agreeably confused me. I was rather more wildly struck than when I first came to London." Even visitors from other European capitals were impressed by what seemed to be constant traffic and throngs of people that filled the streets. One observer at mid-century claimed that "Most of the streets in Paris are as little frequented on week days as those of London on Sundays." Even more shocking to a first time visitor, especially one from the relatively homogeneous society of colonial America, were the great contrasts to be seen. These ranged from the wealth and fashion of the City and St. James's, to the squalid filth found all too frequently on narrow sidestreets and lanes and around the edge of the town, especially to the east in the area of the docks.

In fact, London was in the midst of a great change. It had seen many improvements in the previous quarter-century, but would experience many more in the next. As recently as 1762 Westminster had passed the first act for cleaning and uniformly paving the streets, a move designed to clear away once and for all what Dr. Johnson claimed were "such heaps of filth, as a savage would look on with amazement," the chief
cause of "putrefaction and stench . . . and pestilent distempers." Along with the street improvement, the old great signs hanging out into the thoroughfares from iron brackets, usually outsized symbols of businesses within—a pewter tankard for a tavern, a red devil over the printer's door—were required to be taken down or placed flat against the wall. Thus more light and air might find their way into dark, stifling little streets and old ladies, hurrying home with their produce on rainy days, would be saved the prospect of torrents of rusty water pouring down on their heads. The City gates were being torn down in the 1760's and although there were only two bridges spanning the Thames when John Wentworth arrived, one, Westminster, which provided a new sweeping view of Somerset House and the curve of the river, had been completed as late as 1750 and a third, Blackfriars, was under construction. The complexion of the city was changing, but in a refreshing, healthy direction.³

One of the first stops for any American visitor in London was the appropriate coffee-house. Familiar faces and names from the colonies were sure to be found there and also, for those not as well connected as John Wentworth, recommendations for lodging and directions for getting about in the city. By the mid-eighteenth century, the London coffee-house was an important institution in the life of the town. Gentlemen frequented certain houses according to their class and profession. Doctors met at Batson's, booksellers at the Chapter, writers and wits at the houses near the Inns of Court and Covent Garden. The most famous was White's on St. James's Street,
a coffee-house turned into a private club by the most fashionable men of London and known for its gambling and the high stakes wagered there. Merchants patronized the coffee-houses in the City near the Royal Exchange, and here were to be found familiar colonial names: the Pennsylvania, the Virginia, the Carolina, and of course the New England Coffee House in Threadneedle Street.

The coffee-house played a major role in the dissemination of information in eighteenth-century London. News and gossip were exchanged and it has been stated that it was there "that the national passion for politics found its chief expression." Since reading the newspaper was deemed an absolute necessity by both Englishmen and visitors from the colonies, most coffee-houses had ten or twelve copies of the same paper. Besides a genial atmosphere, coffee-houses provided a number of useful services. Business was conducted there and appointments arranged. At most of the "colonial" houses the arrivals and departures of ships were reported, along with information about who from America was now in London. And anyone who frequented a particular coffee-house could use it as a mailing address. John Wentworth directed his correspondents in New Hampshire to address his mail to the New England Coffee House. The coffee-house was especially useful to young men like Wentworth who were new to London. It provided a place to meet people with experience and influence, men who knew their way about town and politics and who could help in making those all-important contacts necessary for business success. John
was undoubtedly a frequent visitor at the New England Coffee House during his first weeks in London.\textsuperscript{4}

From Threadneedle Street it was but a short walk to the Thames which, with its voluminous amount of traffic, was one of the major sights of London. Many a sail could be seen from time to time on the Piscataqua, but it was as nothing compared to this. The area below London Bridge, where the docks of the East and West India merchants and other major commercial houses lay, was once described as harboring "such a prodigious forest of masts, for miles together, that you would think all the ships of the universe were here assembled." Above the bridge "the whole surface of the Thames" was covered with barges and other smaller boats. Here was entertainment to delight the eye for hours.

One could not linger too long, however, for London boasted too many other sights. Foremost among these, especially for the American colonist, were the city's architectural wonders. Nowhere in the colonies could one see buildings to compare with St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, or the ancient Tower with its intriguing historical associations. And no trip to England would be complete without a boat ride up the Thames to view the medieval magnificence of Windsor Castle or the Renaissance refinement of Henry VIII's Hampton Court Palace. In London itself a visit to the Houses of Parliament was a requisite for any visitor, particularly for those with any interest in politics and government. John Wentworth did not know that before long he would have compelling reasons to spend more time there.
Another major attraction for visitors to London was the large number of fine shops with their alluring windows. By general consensus they were far superior to anything in Europe, even in Paris. One visitor was convinced that "The magnificence of the shops is the most striking thing in London." Behind the large glass display windows lay the latest fashions in English manufactured goods, from elegant clothing and rich leather articles to fine ceramic ware for the gentleman's table. John Wentworth had instructions from a number of his friends, as did most colonists who journeyed to England, to do some shopping for them. Theodore Atkinson informed his London merchant friends, Trecothick and Thomlinson, that he "desired Mr. John Wentworth to purchase some particular things for me & to apply to you for the reimbursement." Shortly after arriving in London, John sent a bill to his uncle, Daniel Pierce, for a number of items including silk, brocade, a suit, and a saddle.  

If shopping were tiring and the incessant rumbling of carts and carriages and the clatter of hoofs on the pavement of the main thoroughfares became onerous, it was never far in London to the more peaceful environment of a quiet lane or shady park. Near the Strand a convenient place where John might seek respite from the constant din were the Inns of Court, Lincoln's Inn and the Temple. Here were tree-lined yards and walks that provided the refreshment of a few moments of contemplative silence. A long narrow tree-shaded court near the Temple was one of Samuel Johnson's favorite escapes. John Wentworth's interest in the Inns of Court, however, probably
went beyond the need for seclusion. Not only were the Inns associated with many great names in English history, but they were commonly the source of legal training for young men from the colonies, especially the South. If John knew no students at the Inns before he left America, he undoubtedly met some during his stay in London.  

One could also escape from the bustle of the streets to one of London's many parks such as St. James's. John never lived far from here while in London and by late 1765 he was residing on Charles Street at St. James's Square. The activities in the Park could not have failed to attract him. What astounded most visitors was the heterogeneous mixture of people to be found there. The Mall in St. James's Park has been called "pre-eminently the 'public walk' of the century—both of 'the World' in the limited sense of 'the Great' and of their acquaintance, and of the people who went to stare as well as to amuse themselves in ways not always decorous." Within a matter of a few minutes a stroller might be hounded by the open solicitations of both beggars and prostitutes and treated to a view of the King and Queen riding by in their carriage. In 1762 a young James Boswell recorded frequent trysts with women of the park, even though he claimed he "had a low opinion of this gross practice and resolved to do it no more." St. James's was also the scene of brutal floggings of soldiers found guilty of various crimes and misdemeanors. Thus the park was a microcosm of what has been called the "curious mixture of fashion, squalor, and the macabre" that characterized London in the eighteenth century.
More purely for entertainment were a variety of pleasure gardens located around the city, primary among them Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and the theater. If one could put up with the unruly mob clamoring to get in and the often rude behavior of the audience during a performance, drama could be an enlightening and exhilarating experience. In spite of these drawbacks and the small number of theaters, stage plays were one of the chief sources of entertainment in London. John had taken part in an attempt to begin a theater in Portsmouth and would not have missed a chance to see the century's greatest actor, David Garrick, perform a Shakespearian tragedy or one of Goldsmith's new comedies at Drury Lane. For a young man from a small and thinly populated colony in North America, the opportunities for diversion in London must indeed have seemed endless. John Wentworth, however, not only had business to attend to but the rest of Britain to see.

The most pressing concern for the Wentworths in early 1764 was the immediate danger posed by Jared Ingersoll to their control of the mast trade. John Wentworth apparently made clear to the Thomlinsons and to Trescothick the seriousness with which Benning and Mark Hunking Wentworth took this threat. They in turn applied pressure where they thought it might do the most good and in the process undoubtedly gave John a good introduction to practical English politics. One of the first people who had to be made aware of the situation was John Henniker, a member of Parliament and one of the Navy's major mast contractors through whom the Wentworths had worked. Most suppliers of naval timber went through contractors such as
Henniker. Occasionally, however, single shiploads of masts were purchased directly by the Navy Board. This seems to have been the case with Ingersoll. His contract was for one load of masts on a trial basis. If the Navy liked what he delivered, there might be contracts for more. He had at least one supporter on the Board for in August, 1763, the comptroller expressed "great hopes" that through Ingersoll "the Government will, not only in what He has contracted for but in the future, be furnished with Masts on better terms than heretofore."

Henniker would not worry about one load of masts bypassing him, but if his main suppliers in America believed their monopoly threatened by Ingersoll, his own position might be in jeopardy. Thus, in April, 1764, not long after John Wentworth arrived in England, a friend of Ingersoll's wrote to him from London that he had "the greatest reason to believe that Mr. Hennika and others in Contract with Mr. Wentworth are Determined to break all your measures and frustrate your designs."

The Wentworths were active in America as well. In that same month one of Benning's deputies signed a deposition in the New York vice-admiralty court to the effect that Ingersoll's loggers, in the process of collecting the eighty sticks called for in his contract, had felled twice that number of trees "to the great waste of the King's woods." The deposition went on to declare Ingersoll "an Improper person to set as the Judge of the Vice Admiralty Court in the Colony of Connecticut concerning or relating to any pine Logs or Masts that may be seized or Libelled." With John Wentworth organizing the opposition in England and Benning Wentworth keeping up relentless
pressure in America, Jared Ingersoll's plans to make Connecticut the principal mast exporting colony in America slowly dissolved. Although Ingersoll had received his contract in early 1761, by the beginning of 1764 no mastship had yet been sent to pick up the load. In February he wrote to the Navy to express his concern. By summer there still was no sign of any ship. It finally arrived in the fall and the masts were loaded by the end of October. They did not reach England until almost 1765.

The delay of the ship was likely related to pressure put on the Navy Board by the Wentworth interests in England, urged on by Benning Wentworth's energetic nephew, John. It was also in 1764 that, in line with the Wentworths' desire, a single vice-admiralty court with final authority for all America was established at Halifax. The ultimate testimony to the Wentworths' success in consolidating control over their mast interests lay in the fact that following his arrival in England, Jared Ingersoll, rather than pursue the matter, concerned himself with other issues. It is difficult to know exactly how much of a role John Wentworth played in defeating Ingersoll's masting plans. It seems likely, however, that with both of the Thomlinsons ill and others, like the contractor Henniker, unaware of the gravity of the situation, John's presence was crucial in keeping the issue before the right parties and seeing that they persisted until victory was won.

Another reason for his success, though, may lie in what seems to have been a chance but fortuitous event, one that not only affected John's stay in England, but went a long way toward determining his entire future. That was a meeting between
Wentworth and the Marquis of Rockingham at the racetrack, probably Newmarket. Rockingham, whose full name was Charles Watson-Wentworth, apparently was intrigued by this young man who was placing large bets and, following an inquiry, an acquaintance was struck.\(^10\) They soon found that their love of horses was not the only thing they had in common. The discovery of their mutual name led to the realization that they were related. In order to establish more exactly what that relationship was, Wentworth sent a letter to his uncle, Daniel Pierce, asking him to trace the Wentworth lineage in America. On July 5, 1764, John again wrote to Pierce, this time to thank him for "Your kind endeavors to ascertain my Pedigree," even though those efforts had not been successful. The first encounter between Wentworth and Rockingham thus probably took place sometime between the end of March, which marked the opening of the season at Newmarket, and early summer, 1764.\(^11\) The two never seem to have discovered exactly how they were related,\(^12\) but it mattered little. Rockingham found Wentworth engaging, invited him to his home, and they soon became close friends.

Charles Watson-Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham, was the leading landed nobleman in Yorkshire making him, according to his most recent biographer, "one of the pillars of the ruling system of politics in the kingdom." Rockingham was a relatively young man, only thirty-four at the time he met John Wentworth, which undoubtedly played a part in their friendship. His country home, Wentworth-Woodhouse, set in the lush rolling landscape of Yorkshire's West Riding, was
truly one of the great houses of eighteenth-century England. Consciously copied after the purest example of classical architecture yet built in Britain, Wanstead House in Essex, Wentworth-Woodhouse was clearly derivative in design. What it lacked in originality, however, it made up for in sheer size. Extended to the extraordinary length of more than 600 feet, Wentworth-Woodhouse was nearly the largest house in the realm. It was indeed what one architectural historian has called a "colossal mansion." In the 1760's it was considered "one of the finest places in the kingdom" and even today, especially to the visitor from America, the sight of this palatial Georgian structure amidst the tranquil Yorkshire countryside is awe-inspiring. Rockingham's new friend from New Hampshire must have been deeply impressed when he first viewed Wentworth-Woodhouse.  

It is not surprising that the two men met at the racetrack, for horses were one of Rockingham's abiding interests. He bred them on his estate and he was one of the early members of the exclusive Jockey Club at Newmarket. In fact, his schedule seemed to be determined as much by the races there as by the meetings of Parliament at Westminster. But horses were not the only attraction for Rockingham at home. He was by nature a local person, one who preferred the secure familiarity of his estate and his county to the demands of eighteenth-century politics in the kingdom's center, London. He was devoted to improvement, especially of an agrarian nature, not only on his own lands but in the surrounding country. The Marquis felt that agriculture in the West Riding
was inefficient and wasteful and he was determined to see it improved by setting a good example himself. He experimented with new methods of cultivation and conservation, tried various crops, used different tools, and manufactured needed items such as bricks and tiles. One observer commented that he had never seen "the advantages of a great fortune applied so nobly to the improvement of a country." Rockingham loved the country and would like to have stayed there, but he was not allowed to indulge his desires. Instead, the sense of public duty incumbent in his station drew him into the mainstream of English politics.

As the leading lord of the important county of Yorkshire, with the influence that position implied, Rockingham wielded considerable power in the political system of Great Britain. That fact, coupled with the favor he had won at court by his firm but diplomatic handling of anti-militia riots in Yorkshire in the late 1750's, made him a man eagerly sought by that consummate politician and manipulator of Parliament, the Duke of Newcastle. In the early sixties Rockingham had obtained office as a Lord of the Bedchamber while Newcastle presided as First Lord of the Treasury. In 1762 Newcastle found himself at odds with the other ministers' opinions on the financing of Britain's continental alliances and, considering himself indispensable to the Ministry's control of Parliament, resigned from government as Pitt had done the year before. George III's new ministers, Bute and Grenville, were now determined to push through their peace terms with France and to force the agreement of Newcastle's friends who still remained in office. When the
Duke of Devonshire declined to join and was unceremoniously removed from office, Newcastle asked his remaining followers to resign. He soon found, however, that the devotion of many of them to their own positions and the current source of power far outweighed any personal loyalty to himself. The Marquis of Rockingham, indicating his attachment to Newcastle, promptly resigned his post. When Parliament overwhelmingly approved the Ministry’s peace proposals, Newcastle began to realize that, indeed, he was not indispensable to the government and that his only political option was to go into opposition. Old and tired, the Duke of Newcastle was not sure that he was up to the challenge. Some of his young whig friends encouraged him, however, and by 1764 this group had considerably augmented its numbers and was holding regular "opposition dinners" at Wildman's Tavern in Albemarle Street.

The Marquis of Rockingham, who had lost his position as Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire as a result of his adherence to Newcastle's position on the peace, was a key member of this circle of close political friends. In fact, he soon emerged as the recognized leader and spokesman of the group. This was not because he was an especially talented individual. He was not the politician that Newcastle was, nor could he aspire to be a public figure the caliber of Pitt, or even compete with some of the lesser lights then performing on the political stage. Rockingham was one of the great aristocrats of the realm with vast estates, a moderate man of conviction who considered himself in the mainstream of English whig tradition. As such he could command a large following and he had a special
ability of reconciling disparate individuals and groups and inspiring their loyalty. He was thus a natural focus of attention for whigs who found themselves at odds with the Ministry of George III, a government that to many seemed increasingly like the old toryism revived. In an age of factional politics Rockingham maintained a surprisingly constant hold on these whigs, so much so that some historians have viewed this group as the original forerunner of the English political party. Whatever they were, the Rockingham Whigs were a political force to be dealt with.15

John Wentworth must have stopped, at least for a moment, to consider his recent stroke of good fortune. He, an unknown young man from a small American colony, had been befriended by one of the great landed nobles of England and, further, one of political consequence. In addition, the tie was all but guaranteed when it turned out that the two men were related. Had he been merely daydreaming, John probably could not have conjured up such a favorable circumstance for his visit to Britain. The relationship was bound to have a profound effect on a man in his twenties, still impressionable, from a colonial family identified with leadership and British authority, but still seeking his own fortune. In immediately practical terms it meant access at the highest level to English politics and politicians and, not unimportantly, ones of a certain hue. But for now, John still had concerns of business and travel to occupy him.

In July, 1764, he was back in Portsmouth on the south coast, probably looking after the Wentworths' mast interests.
In a letter sent via his brother-in-law, John Fisher, who was departing for America, he told his uncle, Daniel Pierce, that any political news he had would be reported by Fisher and "Mr. Livius—a good Young Man and well accomplished." Apparently John was favorably impressed by Peter Livius who was on his way to make his home in New Hampshire. Ironically, he would later view Livius in quite a different light. John also sent a note of introduction for a Mr. Watts and his wife who were sailing for New Hampshire. They were intent on settling near Portsmouth as farmers and, showing a continued interest in his home, husbandry, and people in general, John asked that no "Civilitys" be spared them on their arrival.  

By the middle of August John was far to the north on the high bluffs of Scarborough overlooking the North Sea. Known as "a watering place of some repute," Scarborough was a common stop for visitors from the colonies. John was extremely busy but he managed to find time to jot a note to Daniel Pierce. In response to a previous Pierce query, he expressed regret that the New Hampshire Council was full and that the next two vacancies had already been claimed. He promised, however, that if any more positions opened up before he left England, he would do everything possible to obtain one for his uncle and, he continued, "I think it will be in my Power." Wentworth was beginning to feel that he wielded some influence in places of importance. This may have prompted him to go on and complain to his uncle about the inadequacy of New Hampshire's representation in England. According to John, it was only due to carelessness and inattention that Pierce's name, though placed
in nomination for a councillor's post, had not been presented to the Board of Trade. Further, he was worried that this neglect might place "our property . . . in a precarious Situation." There is reason to believe he was referring specifically to the claims of the Masonian proprietors, of whom Pierce was one, and those who held land from them such as John himself. To remedy what he obviously considered the weak agency of the Thomlinsons, John thought it "highly necessary we have an addition of Integrity and Knowledge" in England. He did not say it, but by this time he probably was thinking of himself for the job.17

In January, 1765, John set out to see, as he termed it, the "Kingdom of Ireland." He visited Dublin and Cork, made the acquaintance of another Wentworth kinsman who lived near Carlow, and sought mercantile contacts that might be of value to his father's trade.18 By early March, however, he was back in London, settled in New Bond Street with more weighty concerns on his mind. On July 20, 1764, by order of the King in Council, the disputed New Hampshire-New York boundary had been fixed at the Connecticut River.19 This meant that all of that land west of the river that Benning Wentworth had assumed was his to grant, was now forfeited to the province of New York. This was bad enough. Worse, although not totally unexpected, the inquiry into the Governor's land-granting policies had led to the disclosure of numerous abuses of the royal prerogative in New Hampshire.

A report of the Board of Trade to the Privy Council clearly indicated that Benning Wentworth was in trouble. He
had gone ahead with his grants west of the Connecticut River after being expressly ordered to desist in such action until a determination on the boundary had been made. When the same proprietors turned up again and again in different grants and it was brought to light that the Governor himself held title to 500 acres in every new township, the Board of Trade had no choice but to conclude that Benning Wentworth's land granting policies were governed by a "view more to private interest than public advantage." As such they were deemed "totally inconsistent" with his official instructions. He was also found negligent in allowing laws to pass without the required suspending clause, and in not forwarding those laws promptly to Whitehall for approval. As a result, a number of what the Board considered to be "absurd, incongruous and unjust" laws had been in effect in New Hampshire for as long as five years without the knowledge of the home government.

It was also believed that Wentworth had been neglecting his duties as Surveyor General of the Woods, allowing the King's best mast timber to be illegally cut and wasted. Adding to the general displeasure of the Board with the Governor was their belief that he had a personal interest, as opposed to that of the crown, in the "waste and unimproved Lands within the Limits of Mason's Grant," a subject that had been under consideration by the British government since 1753. What had seemed probable in New Hampshire on John Wentworth's departure in 1763, was from the vantage point of England a certainty by early 1765. The evidence was overwhelming that Benning Wentworth would be replaced.
John Wentworth knew there was no way to save his uncle. The Governor was old and his transgressions too flagrant. John might, however, be able to salvage the aged gentleman's honor, and that of the Wentworth family. Years later he recalled that when he learned of Benning Wentworth's imminent removal, he quickly composed a defense which he hoped would not only "blunt the edge of Misfortune," but gain the Governor enough time to gracefully resign. In spite of its rhetoric, the case that John Wentworth drew up for his highly placed friend, the Marquis of Rockingham, was not a strong one. According to John, Benning Wentworth's gout (which was indeed real) had prevented him from corresponding with the home government and transmitting the laws passed by the provincial legislature. Strangely, this affliction had "not the least impeded" his other duties as governor. As for the absence of the suspending clause, it had not seemed necessary in acts that involved two private parties who were in agreement. John did not try to explain why Benning had continued to grant lands long after being ordered to stop, but "failed to find the impropriety" of the Governor's reservation of 500 acres for himself in each of the grants he made. After all, he argued, a governor was under the same obligation as any other proprietor to satisfy the requirements of his grant. As long as those conditions were met, what did it matter who had title to the land? John ascribed the recurrence of other names in many of the grants to the large families of the proprietors. When a man's many children, and possibly servants, were ready to leave home, they would thus have a plot of land of their own. Furthermore,
the Governor could not possibly have received large fees for his land grant because of the "general Poverty" of the inhabitants of the province.

John Wentworth denied that the obviously vague wording in the town charters concerning the reservation of the King's timber was an encouragement to indiscriminate and illegal destruction of valuable mast pine. On the contrary, the laws were being enforced and to prove that Benning Wentworth was doing his job as Surveyor General, his nephew referred all critics to notices in New England newspapers of timber seized and prosecutions made in the admiralty courts. Then John answered one more accusation that he said he had been "this very day surprised with"—that Governor Wentworth had made government in New Hampshire "a Family Affair." He categorically denied the charge of nepotism and family favoritism and substantiated it by claiming that he himself had been denied the grant of a township by his uncle "for no other Reason than my Connections with him." Probably because he realized the case he had made was weak, John padded it with reminders of Benning Wentworth's unrelenting services during the war, and, almost as an excuse for many of the charges he knew to be true, a claim that his uncle's meagre salary had caused him to labor in office for many years "almost at his own expense."21 Whatever the effect of John's efforts, he had done his duty for Benning Wentworth and the family, and now the affair was out of his hands.

John wrote to Daniel Pierce on the eighth of April that he had nominated him for the first vacancy on the Council.
One name was ahead of Pierce's on the list, but Wentworth was going to change that the following day when he met with the President of the Board of Trade, Lord Hillsborough, who, he claimed, "is much my friend and has these appointments." With this behind him, John considered his duties completed and he was determined to be back in New Hampshire by summer. First, though, he wanted to see Europe.

From the company he kept in England John Wentworth doubtless heard first-hand reports of the many attractions of Europe. Descriptions of ancient architectural wonders, fabulous art, exotic food, and fine wine could not help but arouse wanderlust in a young man from America. When John departed England in the spring of 1765, he planned to travel through the continent to Italy, thence back to New England. He even scheduled a 500-mile diversion to Prussia to call on a cousin of Daniel Pierce in Berlin. He wrote home that he hoped to arrive back home in Portsmouth "with a few little conveniences, and a vast amount of itinerary . . . amusement, for my Friends assembled at the Office, over . . . a due proportion of cool Punch." John's itinerary was cut short, however, when news reached him in Brabant that cancelled his well-laid plans and sent him hurrying back to London.

George III had reached the end of his patience with the Grenville Ministry and had tried to forge a new one joining Pitt with the friends of Newcastle. When Pitt declined the offer, the King had no choice but to put the government in the hands of the Rockingham Whigs. In July the Marquis of Rockingham was appointed First Lord of the Treasury; he was
now the King's first minister and head of the administration. Wentworth reported that this news of "a general change of Men and measures, made it necessary to return directly to London, having some interests of my Friends, Which were likely to be affected by so universal a commotion." Quite probably John was thinking not primarily of friends, but of himself. With his patron now in the government's most powerful position, he would have as good a chance as anyone to replace his uncle as Governor of New Hampshire.22

By August John Wentworth was back in London writing of these and other events to his relatives in Portsmouth. The change in government had brought the Earl of Dartmouth to the Board of Trade in place of Lord Hillsborough. Since it was Hillsborough who had promised the first vacancy on the New Hampshire Council to Daniel Pierce, John would now have to renew the application. He was able to reassure Pierce, though, that there would be no problem in that regard. Dartmouth, a devotee of Newcastle and a member of the Rockingham group, had promised him any favor he desired from the Board of Trade. There was something more serious, however, that John wanted to discuss with his uncle. That was the Stamp Act and its effect in America.

Since its passage in Parliament the previous March, the Stamp Act had produced a gradually rising groundswell of opposition in the colonies. By the end of July, soon after taking office, the Rockingham Administration was made aware of inflammatory resolves adopted by the Virginia House of Burgesses claiming that the people of the colony had been
unconstitutionally deprived of their "ancient" right of self-taxation. Moreover, by late August the administration had undoubtedly received news of Massachusetts' call for a convention of delegates from all the colonies to meet in New York in October for the purpose of drawing up a petition to the Crown for relief from the odious measure. On August 27, Wentworth wrote home, "I suppose New England is deeply immersed in political discussion of Colony rights, and the principles of taxation upon the Stamp Act," and he wondered "Where shall we poor Hampshire men get money to pay It?" He noted that he had talked with a "certain great man" who had concluded that the tax could not really harm the colonies. John had rejoined that it would not only hurt the colonies, but England as well. He warned that if the act was enforced, British merchants should hope to be reimbursed by Parliament "as it wou'd be much more necessary than for their relief in time of War." The Stamp Act, according to John, would only exacerbate the perennial shortage of currency in the colonies, and the stamp commissioners should be prepared to accept "Boards, plank and joist, Indian Corn and Spanish potatoes" in payment. He then facetiously asked the English gentleman for his help in obtaining appointment as "exporter general" of all these commodities. The Englishman apparently did not find this amusing and changed the topic of discussion. In all seriousness, Wentworth told Daniel Pierce that "The Prudence of our Province, in avoiding any warm resolves, and of the people not expressing an indecent resentment in their publication is very much commended, and may be of good
Consequence to us." Significantly, this opposition to British policies detrimental to the colonies, combined with a firm belief that the colonists should make no strong stand or statement against those policies, was a position that John Wentworth would hold consistently in the years to come.
NOTES

CHAPTER IV


In his biography of John Wentworth, Lawrence Shaw Mayo treats this story as apocryphal on the grounds that "such an account of their meeting is more suggestive of provincial imagination than of the formalities of Wentworth House." (John Wentworth: Governor of New Hampshire, 1767-1775 /Cambridge, Mass., 1921/, 17.) However, according to J. B. Botsford, at Newmarket "the wealthy merchant, on horseback, or in gay equipage, could meet on an equal basis the aristocrat. Undoubtedly it was a shock to many, as to Defoe, that here the person of distinction put himself on a level with grooms or riding boys." (English Society in the Eighteenth Century /New York, 1965 (1924)/, 221.) The fact that Mayo's citation is not to the original source of this story may be related to his unwillingness to accept it. See New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 18(1864):51-52.


John Wentworth and Charles Watson-Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham were distantly related—see page 1. Edmund Burke, in a later reference to John Wentworth, stated that "Lord Rockingham always consider'd the Governor as his family, and as a Person who in every part of his Conduct shew'd a just claim to so honorable a Relation." (Edmund Burke, The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, ed. by Thomas W. Copeland /Cambridge, 1958-1970/, 7.)


Hoffman, Marquis, 13; Guttridge, Early Career, 15-16. Arthur Young, the commentator, is quoted in both Hoffman and Guttridge.


Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, July 5, 1764, Pierce Papers.
Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, August 14, 1764, Pierce Papers. Wentworth mentions in later letters that action is being considered against the Masonian proprietorship.


Board of Trade to Privy Council, July 10, 1764, Public Record Office, C.O.5/342. The charges against Benning Wentworth as Surveyor General are mentioned in Jeremy Belknap, The History of New Hampshire (New York and London, 1970 [1831]), 1:335. On the considerations concerning the Masonian Proprietorship by the Board of Trade in 1753 see NHSP, 29:289-99. It has been suggested that the instigator of the proceedings against Benning Wentworth and the reopening of the situation of the Masonian Proprietors was John Huske, operating through his friend and patron, Charles Townshend. (Jere R. Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism [Cambridge, Mass., 1970], 37, 38n.) If so, this appeared not to affect John Wentworth's opinion of the man. During the debate in Parliament over the Stamp Act he wrote home: "My friend Mr. Huske has great merit in fighting our Cause, which He has constantly done from the first to this Hour, and now with considerable Success. Surely our Country men have been strangely misinformed about him—they are much oblig'd to him and I not only know it but have pleasure in avowing it." (Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.)


Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, April 8, 1765, and probably Aug. 27, 1765, Pierce Papers; Watson, George III, 110-11.

CHAPTER V

A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE:

ROCKINGHAM AND REPEAL OF THE STAMP ACT

John Wentworth was concerned about the reaction to the Stamp Act in the colonies, and so was the Marquis of Rockingham. Almost immediately on his accession to the head of the Ministry Rockingham was confronted with ominous portents of widespread resistance to British policy in America. He had had no previous reason to give much thought to American affairs and his first question must logically have been: was there any reasonable basis for this reaction against the Stamp Act? To answer that he would need to know all he could about the colonies. Rockingham of course had immediate access to the Board of Trade and all other government agencies and officials who were involved with colonial concerns. But what he needed was not an official report. It was possible, after all, that the current troubles stemmed from inadequate advice provided to the ministers who originally sponsored the Stamp Act. What Rockingham needed was a first-hand account of the colonies from an American point of view. It was natural, then, that he first turned for this information to his close friend, John Wentworth.

On September 1, 1765, John sat down in his London residence in New Bond Street to pen, in accordance with Rockingham's "commands," a lengthy description of the North American colonies along with his opinion on the recent trade and revenue acts. The dominant theme in his letter repeated what he had written to Daniel Pierce only a few days earlier: that the greatest
value of colonies lay in their trade, and anything that interfered with that trade, including taxes and debilitating restrictions, was harmful both to the colonies and to the mother country. Stating this mercantile premise boldly at the beginning, John hoped his description would prove "that greater benefit would accrue to this country [England], from their trade, than can be expected from their present ability considerably to increase or rather create a revenue."

Plunging ahead, he worked systematically from north to south, beginning with Canada and Nova Scotia and finishing in the West Indies, with even some reference to nearly uninhabited East and West Florida. Although he devoted by far the largest portion of his account to New England, John showed a remarkable knowledge of conditions in all the colonies. Pennsylvania he described as the "most flourishing" of the provinces, Virginia the most "populous and opulent." Due to its relatively primitive state, Georgia's trade was negligible. New York, on the other hand, had great potential as an exporter of iron. Wentworth showed an awareness of the main exports and imports and the pattern and balance of trade in each colony. He was mistaken on a few counts, such as describing Virginia as "the only colony not indebted to Great Britain," but his information overall was surprisingly correct. He even accurately estimated the colonial population at "about two millions of subjects."

Understandably, John showed the most interest in the New England provinces. He justified this on the grounds that "they are so great a division of the American dominions both
in trade and number of inhabitants, and as the late regulations will more particularly affect them, than the other colonies."
Indeed, it was in relation to this region that he went into the most detail concerning problems in the colonies and the probable effect of the recent British measures. New England's major exports went to the West Indian Islands, some to be traded for goods brought back to the mainland. The majority, however, were exchanged for items loaded on board and carried to England. There, both ship and cargo were sold to pay for British manufactures. This trade produced little cash and for the previous ten years, according to Wentworth, New England had continued at a "considerable loss." Exacerbating the problem, by draining off valuable currency already in short supply, was the fact that the New England colonies could not raise enough grain to feed themselves and were forced to import it. Recent restrictions on the trade of surplus goods to the foreign West Indies had also hampered New England's commerce and cut even more deeply into the merchants' ability to purchase manufactured goods in England. And while he was on the subject of burdensome and unproductive restrictions on trade, John brought up an older regulation that required all commerce from the European continent to the colonies to flow through Great Britain. Every year New Englanders carried a quantity of codfish to Portugal, Spain, and Italy in return for salt, wine, oil, and fruit. The requirement of entering these products in England, paying a duty and then reexporting them for home was unreasonable and, Wentworth claimed, "attended with insupportable expense." This certainly was not an encouragement to the trade of the empire, and had resulted only in widespread smuggling.
John Wentworth recognized that the greatest problem in New England, and in almost all of the other colonies, was a shortage of circulating currency. It was also clear to him that the imposition of a direct tax such as that called for by the Stamp Act could only aggravate the situation. He went as far as to predict that the Stamp tax and the three pence molasses duty of 1764, if rigorously enforced, "will consume every shilling of specie in New England within two years, and will be as affectually draining them as if it was annihilated." The results could be catastrophic. With all their money gone, colonists would no longer be extended credit in the mother country. They would thus be forced to develop their own manufacturing and would not be able to produce goods for much less than twice the cost of buying them in Britain. This added hardship, according to Wentworth, would halt the growth and settlement of the colonies, allowing fertile land to "lay waste and useless" that might otherwise "support vast numbers of laborious people, and extend the commercial interest of England beyond their most sanguine expectations." The merchants and manufacturers of England would certainly feel the dire effects of the loss of so valuable a market. For proof of the value of the colonies to the British mercantile system, John suggested a comparison of "the present state of Great Britain to her state one century back, at which time her colonies began to be useful."

John argued that without "some indulgence to their trade and an exemption from taxation, . . . the colonies will be depressed beyond recovery." Specifically, he proposed
that the duty on foreign molasses be lowered from three pence to one. This would end smuggling, provide additional specie for the colonies with which to purchase British manufactures, and raise a real revenue that would not be eaten up by the cost of enforcement. Further, he suggested that wine, fruit, and oil from Iberia and Italy be allowed directly into the colonies under a "moderate duty." This would stop the "running" of these commodities and would also raise a revenue. Finally, and most important, John Wentworth told the Marquis of Rockingham that the Stamp Act should be repealed. The great debt that the colonies were struggling under, exacerbated by the current trade restrictions, made the attempt to collect a revenue by a direct tax a highly imprudent policy. John's suggestions were not separately conceived; they were part of his integrated theory of the British Empire. He believed that his argument proved that the colonies' "present advantage to Great Britain must arise from their trade." As long as that trade suffered under such burdens, Britain could not expect to reap the full benefits of her colonial system. If, on the other hand, these hindrances were removed, trade would increase, prosperity would return, and possibly "in a few years a more direct assistance might be obtained." Summarizing his position for Rockingham, John predicted that if the government in England would "rescue" the colonies "from the late imposed tax, and preserve them from new ones: also permit an indulgence of every trade which cannot prejudice Great Britain, and some necessary assistance to that which tends directly to her advantage, the colonies will then flourish, their demand for
British manufactures would increase and be paid for: dependence and fidelity will then be their indispensible interest."¹

John Wentworth's letter of September 1, 1765, is significant because, as well as can be ascertained, it was the first time anyone had suggested the repeal of the Stamp Act to Rockingham since he had taken office. The actual decision of the administration for repeal was not made until well after the first of the year, but it seems that the first minister was committed to the idea long before that. It is quite possible that John Wentworth's reasoned and well-balanced account of the difficult circumstances of the American colonies turned Rockingham's thoughts to the idea of repealing the Stamp Act, and that subsequent events only strengthened his inclination toward that solution. It may be no coincidence that another of Wentworth's suggestions, lowering the duty on foreign molasses from three pence to one, was adopted at the same time the Stamp Act was repealed.²

John Wentworth's suggestion of repeal was especially remarkable for its early date. It was known at the time that there were objections in America to the Stamp Act. It was not known, however, that there had already been riots and destructive violence in the colonies, and that the months ahead would bring widespread resistance and eventually outright defiance of the law. Moreover, the results of the Stamp Act Congress which called for repeal did not reach England until late in the year. These developments thus could not have influenced Wentworth. Rather, his assessment of measures that needed to be taken was based on a thorough knowledge of economic
conditions in the colonies and the trade disadvantages they labored under. As might be expected from the scion of a prominent American merchant family, John had a sound knowledge of Britain's system of empire and based his argument against further taxation entirely on sound mercantilist principles. Unlike the earlier Virginia resolves and the later Stamp Act Congress petition, he made no mention of rights under the English Constitution.

Although John's letter was concerned with the future welfare of the colonies, it seems also to have carried suggestions portentous for himself. The changes that he recommended in the trade and revenue regulations would start the colonial system back toward a harmonious and profitable operation. But that would not be enough. He went on to argue that one of the guarantees of a smooth running empire lay in the judicious choice of governors for the colonies. A good governor would maintain order and stability, foster economic growth that would complement rather than compete with the mother country, promote settlement and prosperity, and develop a sound defensive force that would not require British aid but could be called on to aid the British if needed. Wentworth told Rockingham that "It would be almost endless to enumerate the variety of essential service that a disinterested, diligent and faithful Governor can and ought to effect." Determining the best policies to follow was not nearly so difficult as finding the "integrity and resolution to carry them into execution." John presumably felt that he had these essential qualities and was counting on Rockingham to recognize that fact. Indeed, since at least
midsummer he had been seeking his uncle's job. George Meserve, the new distributor of stamps in New Hampshire who set sail for home no later than the middle of July, must have discussed the possibility with Wentworth before he left England. Writing from Portsmouth after his arrival in September, Meserve referred to John's "resolution" to become governor and, apparently after broaching the subject in the province, found the "People in General" in favor of the idea.

But Meserve had more urgent news than this for Wentworth. Before he had even set foot on shore he was rudely awakened to the high running sentiments against the Stamp Act in America. On September 9, before his ship could dock in Boston, an officer and marines came on board to prevent the vessel from being sunk by an angry mob convinced that it carried forty-five tons of stamp paper. Further, the harbor pilot brought a note for Meserve from some "Principal Gentlemen" in Portsmouth, warning him that feeling was just as strong there as it was in Boston and that it would not be safe to return until he had promised to give up his office of stamp distributor. He was forced to write a letter to that effect before he was allowed off the boat, but he was still burned in effigy in Portsmouth. When he finally arrived in that town on the eighteenth of September the local Sons of Liberty forced him to make another resignation, this time publicly on the Parade. Nor was this to be the end of Meserve's troubles. He later reported that at the end of October a mob of some 600 men bullied him into another oath of assurance that he would not execute his office, and the following January he was again threatened.\(^5\)
It was not a motley rabble that confronted George Meserve. He found among his tormentors "the principal Inhabitants of the Town and the Representatives of the County." The local Sons of Liberty did in fact include some of the most important merchants of Portsmouth. The Speaker of the House, John Sherburne, and his two sons-in-law, Woodbury and John Langdon, Samuel Cutts, and even John Wentworth's two uncles, Daniel Pierce and Daniel Rindge, were all active against the Stamp Act. Meserve told Secretary of State Henry Conway that the oath he was forced to take in October was "administered by Daniel Warner Esq. one of his Majestys Council, Chief Justice of the Inferior Court and Lieut. Col. of the Town Militia," and went on to complain that these antics were countenanced by such significant people as Theodore Atkinson and Jonathan Warner.

Just as John Wentworth had explained to the Marquis of Rockingham, times were hard in the colonies and the stamp tax did not make them any better. These difficulties fell on the large merchants as readily as the small. Even Meserve described the condition of trade as "terrible;" there was a great shortage of cash and the molasses duty was working a very real hardship. In a statement strange from a man ready to enforce the Stamp Act, Meserve exclaimed to John Wentworth that "if something is not done for us on the other side the water I don't know how these Colonies are to subsist." Benning Wentworth was well aware of the nearly universal opposition to the Stamp Act and, as he had done with so many inconvenient government directives before, chose to ignore it. He refused
to accept Meserve's commission and later excused his action by claiming that he had never received official notification that the Stamp Act was law.  

The New Hampshire Assembly declined to send representatives to the Stamp Act Congress in New York in October, possibly due to ill-feelings with that province over the recent boundary dispute. Nevertheless, on November 22 the Assembly voted approval of the resolutions and the petition for repeal adopted by the Congress. Further, these were to be signed and forwarded to two new special provincial agents chosen specifically to present these documents at the proper agencies, and to use "their utmost Endeavors" toward the desired end of repeal of the Stamp Act. The two special agents were Barlow Trecothick and John Wentworth.

John did not yet know of the appointment or of the petitions being forwarded to him when he wrote to Daniel Rindge late in November. He was now living in Westminster on Charles Street at the corner of St. James's Square. With an eye on the growing political agitation in England over America's response to the Stamp Act, and his own designs for the future, it behooved him to be as close to Whitehall and the Houses of Parliament as possible. He was frankly alarmed at the "melancholy" state of things. The lion's share of the blame for the Stamp Act, which he found "totally obnoxious," he placed on the Grenville Administration, which had "utterly misapprehended" colonial trade. But this wretched legislation was not entirely the fault of the ministers. Nearly as guilty were colonists themselves, in particular self-serving men who
came to England for brief stays seeking positions or favors, who enjoyed "being noted by the Great Men," and were willing to say whatever would most promote their advancement. John felt that these men had only a superficial knowledge of America based on their own small vantage point and accomplished nothing but the spread of ignorance. The only way to really know all the colonies and the complexities of their commercial relationships within the empire was, according to Wentworth, through "study, experience, and assiduous well directed inquiry."

He did not know what action would be taken in England, but John assured Rindge that the administration was sympathetic to the colonies. The problem lay with the opposition, many of whom had originally voted for the Stamp Bill, and who, he had discovered, were still "very warm against us." There was strong sentiment for enforcement of the act merely because the Americans had resisted it through the use of threats and violence. For many in England, the principle of Parliamentary sovereignty was at stake. But John, too, felt that he could stand behind the constitution when attempting to "combat" the hundreds of such arguments he encountered daily. The fact was that the colonies were not represented in the legislative body that was taxing them. John did not fail to point out to his English opponents that the citizens of London who were represented, who had their interests doubly protected by their immediate proximity to the legislature, and who could claim "evry advantage to obtain redress," often broke out into riotous open opposition to Parliamentary policies. In many such debates, he claimed, he did not shy away from holding
forth the "inalienable right" of the colonies. Another matter of principle that he felt strongly about was the growing abuse involved in the use of the admiralty courts. The Revenue Act of 1764 had placed all violations of the acts of trade, regardless of where committed, within the jurisdiction of a newly created vice-admiralty court in distant Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was bad enough. Worse was a seeming perversion of the ancient English due process of law by placing offenses against the non-commercial Stamp Act within the realm of this juryless court. Although the Wentworths' mast interests originally dictated a desire for the Halifax court, John Wentworth now lamented the "cruel destructive deprivation of the Ad[/miral]ty Courts."

When arguing the matter himself in Britain, John Wentworth was willing to openly defend the colonies in terms of basic rights and constitutional principles. He did not, however, think the colonies should do the same thing. At this time, in the late Autumn of 1765, there seemed to be a wait-and-see attitude in England; what would the Americans do next? Word was expected from the Stamp Act Congress at any time and John believed, though mistakenly, that the Ministry's policy would be largely determined by the action taken in New York. Thus he expressed great concern over the imminent message from the colonies. He earnestly hoped, he wrote to his uncle, that "it may be firm, decent, loyal and expressive, if possible evading all matter of right, a point too critically dangerous to discuss."
"Right—a point too critically dangerous to discuss!"

Why did John feel free to use the argument of right himself, but would deny that privilege to his fellow colonists? Perhaps because he saw firsthand the immediate negative feelings aroused in England by that line of colonial justification. Wentworth may have felt that he could handle the subtle distinctions demanded by this argument in face-to-face confrontations. Familiarity with British emotional reaction to colonial objections, however, may have led him to believe that a flat statement of constitutional rights would, indeed, be "critically dangerous." Instead, he was convinced that the safest, most judicious, and most productive course of action for Americans was to stress, as he had done in his letter to Rockingham, "the inability of America" to pay the tax. This would, according to John, "put it in the power of our friends to labor for us, without the insidious objections of the opposition to the repeal of this odious Act." He did not know when he wrote this that only a week earlier his own province, in hopes of repeal, had signed a strong statement of colonial rights under the English constitution and chosen him as their agent to present it in England.

In his November letter John also mentioned, for the first time in his correspondence home, the possibility of his appointment as governor of New Hampshire. He cautioned that the rumor was "premature" and that "indeed there has been no vacancy or expected removal from Jamaica to N.H. . . . for the last eight months, but has been given to me in public report, and many of them been the subject of News paper declamation."
Nevertheless, he told Daniel Rindge that "it is more than probable I shall have N.H." If he did return as governor, he promised that he would be his own man, under no obligation to any person, party, or interest. Obviously sensitive to Benning Wentworth's recent troubles, John also felt obliged to renounce all possible influence by members of his own family. His only aim would be to advance the welfare of New Hampshire, something he would be in a particularly good position to do through his close ties with the Marquis of Rockingham. He was confident that this relationship would serve to procure "some special advantages" for the province. With the current dispute in mind, he assured his uncle that if he was expected to carry out measures that ran contrary to the "real rights and truest interests" of the people of New Hampshire, he would refuse to serve. He would much rather, he claimed, "retire to Wolfeborough and procure a scanty subsistence from hardest labour than either undertake so ungenerous an employ or not oppose any one that did." He was sure, though, that the present administration would make no such demands on any governor.9

The question by this time, in both England and America, was what would the government do in regard to the Stamp Act? As resistance in the colonies widened and became increasingly hostile, it became obvious that some kind of action would have to be taken. The experience of George Meserve was not isolated. Prior to his arrival in America, Boston had set the tone for demonstrating displeasure with the act and all officers who might attempt to enforce it. A mob hung stamp distributor, Peter Oliver, in effigy, then descended on his house and
ransacked it after breaking down the doors and smashing the windows. Oliver resigned his commission. Several weeks later another mob attacked Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's stately Georgian mansion with even more gusto, believing (falsely) that Hutchinson was a secret supporter of the Stamp Act. This lawless desecration of property was shocking even to many opponents of the British measure. Nevertheless, the violence spread. With few exceptions, similar hangings, riots, and forced resignations occurred throughout the colonies. 10 By November 1, when the Stamp Act was to go into effect, the colonies had all declared their opposition to it and there was no one left in America willing to carry it out.

There seemed to be but three choices before the Rockingham Ministry: enforcement of the Stamp Act, which undoubtedly could not be done without the use of arms; modification of the act in hopes of making it more palatable to the colonies; or outright repeal. John Wentworth was close enough to Rockingham to know that the first alternative was never seriously considered. By November Wentworth could report that Rockingham "would give his Interest to repeal 100 stamp Acts, before he would run the Risque of such Confusions, as would be caused by Enforcing it." 12 Still, Rockingham realized that to make any kind of conciliatory policy possible he would need a strong and convincing argument. His caution is understandable given John Wentworth's comments about those who were "very warm against us." Not only was there a strong opposition in Parliament to a policy of relief, especially repeal, but Rockingham could expect a fierce battle from some of his own
ministers, in particular the Earl of Northington, Charles Yorke, and Charles Townshend.

By late in November, in preparation for the reconvening of Parliament the following month, Rockingham had begun to formulate a strategy. Significantly, his plan emphasized what John Wentworth had recommended to him early in September. He hoped to keep the Stamp Act in the background "till Good Principles are laid down for Easing and Assisting N/orth7 America and being well informed of the high Importance of the Commerce to N/orth7 A/merica7 respectively to the Mother Country." Thus the necessity for relief for America from the burden of the stamp tax might be made apparent.

Rockingham knew he would need pressing evidence to support his argument and, with the aid of John Wentworth's co-agent, Barlow Trecothick, he was working to obtain it. Trecothick had an interest in America that went back to his early years. Born in England in 1720, he had emigrated to Boston with his family at the age of seven. An apprenticeship carried him into the world of commerce and he eventually became associated with the mercantile firm of Charles Apthorp, a wealthy Boston merchant. As Apthorp's commercial representative, Trecothick traveled to the West Indies and to England. In London he worked with Apthorp's trading partner, John Thomlinson. By 1755 he had decided to stay in his native land in partnership with Thomlinson, who was also agent for New Hampshire and a close associate of the Wentworths whom Trecothick had come to know in the colonies. In the 1760's with both of the Thomlinsons ill, Barlow Trecothick became the most important
member of the firm and by 1765 was considered one of London's leading merchants.  

Trecothick had been a leading mercantile spokesman against passage of the Stamp Act in the first place and in early November, when American resistance to it had become obvious, he wrote a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham. He warned that if the Americans carried out their refusal to comply with the act, as almost surely they would, it would mean a halt to all commercial intercourse that depended on stamped paper. This would kill the demand for British exports, hurt merchants and manufacturers, throw people out of work leaving them hungry, and lead to untold ruin. Rockingham's reply was to invite Trecothick to a private dinner party, one of his favorite means of collecting information and making decisions during this difficult period. From that point on, Rockingham and Trecothick worked closely together. On December 4 a committee of London North America merchants was formed under the leadership of Barlow Trecothick to work for repeal of the Stamp Act. On December 6 this committee agreed on a circular to be sent "to the outports and to the manufacturing Towns" which outlined the crucial interests of the kingdom that were at stake and appealed for aid in the form of pressure on Parliament. This letter, which was the combined work of Rockingham and Trecothick, emphasized points that John Wentworth had made from the time he first wrote to Rockingham on the Stamp Act in September. There was to be no mention of constitutional issues and all arguments should be based on the hardships caused in England by the restrictions placed on the
colonies. The appeal was sent to thirty cities and towns and some twenty-five petitions for relief eventually reached Parliament. The importance of the circular can best be seen in the words of Rockingham's secretary, Edmund Burke, who called it "the principal Instrument in the happy repeal of the Stamp Act."

English merchants and manufacturers did indeed have reason to be concerned with the colonial situation. Since 1764 there had been a recession in the North American trade. It was well known that the colonists considered the Stamp tax an added hardship and were deeply opposed to it. Warnings had emanated from some of the wealthiest and most highly regarded American merchants that the act might put a complete stop to trade and that bills owed in England could well go unpaid. Thus the Stamp Act, though not a trade law, seemed to be very much involved in the present economic downturn, and the English mercantile community began to identify repeal with a return of prosperity. They had even more reason to desire the end of the Stamp Act when, shortly, word arrived that the Americans were taking actions to boycott British goods.

Parliament met briefly before Christmas, but postponed consideration of the American question until after the first of the year. Avoiding consultation with his full official cabinet, Rockingham continued to hold his private dinners seeking practical information and advice that might lead to a workable policy. One point by now was clear; if relief was to be gained for the colonies, an attempt would have to be made to placate a Parliament and public incensed at the violence
and blatant disregard of British authority in America. During the week after Christmas, this portion of administration policy was decided. A declaration of absolute sovereignty of Parliament over the colonies would be proposed. Exactly what form of relief would be offered along with this was still undetermined.

When Parliament reconvened on January 14, 1766, John Wentworth sat in the House of Commons as a spectator from one o'clock until ten in the evening. The American question was the main topic of discussion and the session was dominated by a spirited and highly important debate between William Pitt and George Grenville. Pitt had not spoken in the Commons for over a year and although his opposition to the Stamp Act was well known, no one was sure what form his argument would take. As England's most influential and charismatic political figure, his words were awaited with great interest, not least by Rockingham and his ministers who, during the recess, had tried to get the great man to join the Administration but had been rebuffed. Pitt, who John noted "spoke clearly and nervously," began by upholding the authority of Britain over the colonies "in every circumstance of government and legislation whatsoever." He went on, however, to note one exception; he did not include taxation as part of the governing and legislative power. Taxes, he claimed, were "a voluntary gift and grant of the Commons alone." The Stamp Act, according to Pitt, "was founded on an erroneous principle" and should be repealed.
Swayed by both the thrust of Pitt's argument and his persuasive oratorical powers, John Wentworth was moved to report that the Great Commoner "never was half so great before. No Subject—scarce any Monarch even had such Homage paid him. The whole House of Commons hung upon him. He was happiest who made him the greatest Compliments. Great Ministers implor'd (openly) the Honor to serve under him, and inferior Luminarys wish'd only to shine, by reflection from this Sun." In contrast, John noted, George Grenville "made a weak, desultory defence, of weak and ruinous measures, but was little attended to."¹⁷

So impressed was John Wentworth that he characterized Pitt's argument as exhibiting "the most profound and yet shining knowledge of the British Constitution."¹⁸ In spite of appearances, many members of Parliament did not agree. Even the Administration did not concede that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies, but Rockingham had been hoping for a chance to propose the repeal of the Stamp Act. With Pitt's resounding rhetoric now in front of them, this course was finally resolved upon by the Ministry at two of Rockingham's unofficial meetings on January 19 and 21. By this time the petitions solicited by Barlow Trescothick and the merchants committee began to arrive at the House of Commons asking for relief from economic distress that seemed to be caused by the late acts of Parliament aimed at the colonies. Large ports and manufacturing cities—London, Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow—were represented as well as smaller towns—Leicester, Bradford, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Taunton, Witney, Dudley, Chippenham, and others. The petition from the Stamp Act Congress
was presented to the House on the twenty-seventh. After a long discussion and many objections, including one that it "Strongly pointed at Independency upon the Mother Country," the decision was made to ignore it. For purposes of confidentiality the House of Commons on January 28 resolved itself into a committee of the whole and called for the consideration of all information relevant to America. This was to include official government papers, petitions from the various cities of Great Britain, and testimony from persons with specific knowledge of the colonies, especially the colonial agents.

London seethed with political controversy as the month of February was consumed by exhausting debates in Parliament over repeal of the Stamp Act. Although John Wentworth had not yet gained a political office, he claimed to have plans to sail home in the middle of the month. He now canceled those plans. An intimate of the Rockingham Whigs and deeply concerned in the outcome for his own province, John deemed his presence at Westminster a necessity. This became even more apparent when news of his appointment as special agent for New Hampshire, with Barlow Trescothick, arrived in England along with the province petitions for repeal of the Stamp Act.

On February 3, the House of Commons ordered some thirty persons to attend the following day ready to testify concerning the Stamp Act. John Wentworth was among those on the list, along with Barlow Trescothick and Benjamin Franklin. It was also on the third that Secretary of State Conway proposed the Ministry's first resolution. This was the one decided on in
December stating that all laws passed by Parliament were binding on the colonies "in all Cases whatsoever." When the vote was taken at nearly three o'clock on the morning of the fourth, scarcely a voice was raised against it. On February 11 and 13, when the petition of the London merchants was considered, Trescothick and Franklin were the administration's star witnesses, each taking the stand for four hours on those dates respectively. The evidence they presented delineating the severe straits of the mercantile community in England and America was well designed by Rockingham as the basis of a proposed repeal of the Stamp Act.21

John was not called on for evidence. He of course did not have the reputation of Dr. Franklin nor, as he later lamented, did he represent an influential province. Neither was his friendship with Rockingham likely to carry much weight with those in opposition to the ministry's policies. Nevertheless, this did not diminish his interest in the proceedings and he was diligent in his attendance in the House, sitting for sessions that sometimes lasted thirteen hours and often continued well past midnight. After a few hours sleep he probably headed for the New England Coffee House for breakfast, his mail, and a discussion of the previous day's events with "a Club of Gentlemen" that included John Huske, formerly of New Hampshire, now a member of Parliament and an advocate of repeal. By the fifteenth of February, John was able to sit down with pen and paper to congratulate Daniel Pierce on that "happy prospect." The resolution for repeal had not even been introduced yet, but Wentworth was confident that the whole
process would be completed shortly, within a month at the latest. The testimonies of Franklin and Trecotthick had no doubt impressed many in Parliament, but John thought the crucial evidence was to be found in the petitions from the trading and manufacturing towns of England and Scotland. It seemed to him that "repeal appears to be more necessary for this Country than America. Such vast numbers of manufacturers being turn'd out of Employ unless it is done, who if they should not starve, from more idleness wou'd raise a dangerous Fever in the State, but will soon be press'd into tumult by Hunger and want."

Unfortunately, John had to report that George Grenville was fighting "with the most malignant obstinacy" to prevent the extinction of the act that he had sponsored and worked so hard to bring into existence. Grenville seemed to be trying to stall, hoping that new evidence of "disorderly outrages" would arrive from America to inflame Parliament against the colonies again. It was not that there was such a great devotion to, as John termed it, this "abominable and justly odious Taxation." Rather, as he had explained before, enforcement was seen by many Englishmen "as the point on which the Honor of Parliament and Sovereignty of Gr[eat] Br[ritain] materially rest." John said that he could not disagree with this idea more. One thing he did know, however, was that the "excesses" in the colonies had been detrimental to the cause of repeal and he could not help regretting them. He heaped high praise on Rockingham and his ministers who, out of office, were "Virtuous, independent and patriots," and now that they were
in, remained "assiduous, uninfluenc'd and uncorrupt." From
the beginning, John claimed, Rockingham had seen the inequity
of the Stamp Act and been determined to redress it. He assured
Pierce that news of the disorders in America had not changed
the goal of the administration. Wentworth personally found
the actions "reprehensible," especially as they provided
ammunition for the Grenville faction's barrage against the
ministry. It is not surprising that he attempted to keep word
of George Meserve's ordeal in New Hampshire as quiet as possible.
Rockingham did not need any more bad news to interfere with
his Parliamentary offensive. Barring such an eventuality,
John was confident that he would soon be able to report the
complete success of the administration's efforts. 22

But word of the probable repeal of the Stamp Act was
not John's only news for home. He told Pierce that the gover-
norship of New Hampshire was now his, if and when he wanted it.
In fact, he had had the appointment delayed in hopes that
Benning Wentworth would realize the hopelessness of his situa-
tion and gracefully step aside, as much for his own honor as
anything. John seemed to show signs of impatience with his
uncle when he exclaimed that Benning's resignation "is doubtful
and immaterial to me." He had done his best for the old
gentleman and if the governor continued to be recalcitrant, he
would just have to bear the consequences. But John had another
reason for desiring a delay. He would not put himself in a
position that required an oath to enforce the Stamp Act. He
would never support the act and if it was not repealed he would
refuse the governor's post. As he told Pierce, "If this
commission shou'd be so circumstanc'd as to make my Duty to it incompatible with my Duty to the Province, beleive me Sir, my Hands and Heart shall never be burthen'd with it." By this time, however, that possibility seemed remote. For the good of New Hampshire John felt he should take the office because, if he did not, it would probably go to a certain Scotsman with no particular interest in the province or its people.

Another position that John was still concerned should be filled by a person with a genuine interest in New Hampshire, was that of agent at Whitehall. The situation had not improved since his last report. The Thomlinsons simply were no longer up to the task and as a result, province interests were appallingly neglected. Referring to the Board of Trade's boundary decision in 1764, Wentworth lamented that New Hampshire "is near a fourth part of it given to New York, because No one said a Word to the Contrary." He also feared that New Hampshire's share of the reimbursement granted by Parliament to the colonies for their effort in the recent war had been lost. Seven thousand pounds gone because application for it was not made in time! John said he would go to the treasury and do what he could to save the claim.

The job of colonial agent was not easy. It took energy, devotion, and persistence. John had experience at Whitehall and spoke with authority when he said that "A man must have patience and resolution to resist the endless delays of Office, neither ought evasions or even Refusal to discourage him."

The Thomlinsons wanted energy because of their poor health. Possibly more crucial was their lack of interest, a fact
traceable, John felt, to the trifling salary paid them by New Hampshire. He warned that "unless our Province will appoint an Agent, and give him a handsome Salary, of at least Eight or nine hundred per annum Sterling or a thousand, whereby he may be independent of People here and have it his Duty to exert his utmost attention in your Service, your affairs will forever be neglected." A thousand pounds was a far cry from fifty, the sum allotted to the position by the legislature. John realized that it might "sound great to give an agent £1000 Sterling per annum," but believed the province "wou'd very soon find that such a Salary wou'd be the best Expence they ever paid."

John in fact had a specific person in mind for the job. Himself. This in spite of the fact that he was already guaranteed the governorship. John's willingness to stay as agent for two or three more years, or however long the province might desire, seems a clear indication that he was thoroughly enjoying his stay in Great Britain. It is not difficult to understand why, for he moved in some of the highest political and social circles in England, an opportunity not afforded many colonials who set out for the mother country, especially young men from small provinces. Indeed, this was one of the reasons why he thought New Hampshire should want him there. As he stated, "My Connections here have happily fallen with the first people in the Kingdom, whose particular respect enables me to do more than most Men, in any affair of public concern." Perhaps memories of the relatively primitive condition of life in the small seaport of Portsmouth also gave John
second thoughts about returning so soon, even as Governor. He told Daniel Pierce, however, that he would do whatever was in the best interest of New Hampshire.

John was also able to give Pierce the good news of his acceptance for a seat on the Provincial Council along with another of John's uncles, Daniel Rindge, and, somewhat surprisingly, an old enemy of the Wentworth family, Henry Sherburne. Less cheerful was his report on the "precarious state" of the Masonian proprietorship. The case brought to the Board of Trade by persons interested in a reversion of the private title to the crown had lain dormant for sixteen years. Now, however, it was in danger of being revived because of the focus on America brought on by the Stamp Act. Through a friend at the Board, probably Lord Dartmouth, John had been allowed to take the original papers home for study, and although he found the charges against the proprietors "far from satisfactory," he warned Pierce that they might "suffice to overturn your title unless refuted." If the proceedings were rekindled he would do all in his power to squelch them and, with Dartmouth on their side, John was reasonably sure of success. In the meantime, though, he recommended that word of this not go beyond the proprietors, "lest an Idea of uncertainty shou'd depreciate the value of those Estates, and the People in general be apprehensive of the security of their settlements."

On February 21, 1766, Secretary Conway introduced a resolution in the Commons to repeal the Stamp Act. In so doing he stressed the importance of British-American trade and said that any revenue gained from this tax did not justify forsaking
"the trade of this country and the liberty of America in the pursuit of it."²⁴ When a vote was finally taken at two a.m. on the twenty-second, the resolution was approved by 276 to 168. It was then ordered that bills be drawn up and brought to the House on the first and seventh resolutions. Between February 24 and 28 the Declaratory and Repeal Bills were read several times and finally committed. On the first of March, John wrote to Daniel Pierce that a "Bill pass'd a third reading in the Commons to repeal the Stamp Act in America, and I have scarce a doubt but will pass the Lords next week. Permit me to congratulate you upon this happy Event, obtain'd for us by the ablest and most patriotic Administration these Kingdoms have been bless'd with for many Centuries."

With the King's signature on March 18, the repeal of the Stamp Act became official. The great goal had finally been accomplished and John Wentworth was justifiably ecstatic. He undoubtedly enjoyed himself at a great ball, "among the most brilliant ever seen in the City," that was given in honor of the event. Barlow Trecothick presided and large numbers of the nobility were in attendance. All thanks, John told Daniel Pierce, belonged to Rockingham and his friends who had persevered so long against such difficult odds to provide relief for the colonies. He suggested that New Hampshire adopt a resolution of gratitude to be sent to the Marquis "whose Labor and assiduity" had been "incredible." "Without him," he told Pierce, "you may rely on it—we shou'd not have been releiv'd." John's greatest apprehension was that Americans would take this opportunity to gloat over their victory with unseemly
celebrations. He knew this had been one of the principal fears of those who had opposed repeal and, if their predictions proved true, Rockingham would be greatly embarrassed. He had given his word, he told Pierce, that the people of New Hampshire would indulge in no such demonstrations, and he asked his uncle's help in fostering an attitude of "prudent" thankfulness among the citizens of the province.25

It is, in fact, from an unassuming statement dealing with this matter that we gain a sharper insight into what was coming to be John Wentworth's perception of the relationship of the colonies to England within the British Empire. John hoped that the conduct of the citizens of New Hampshire would be "temperate and dutiful, and that they will rejoice to receive this relief from the parental care and justice of the mother country."26 The phrase "mother country" was more than just an oft used metaphor to John Wentworth; for him it carried true symbolic significance. England was indeed the benevolent "parent," the colonies "dutiful" children. There was no sense of equality in this relationship. The "mother," from her superior wisdom and strength, dispensed justice and, when necessary, "relief." The obedient children received it thankfully and with humility. This was why it was difficult for John to talk about "rights," even though he had been tempted to use this defense when arguing with certain obstreporous and overbearing Englishmen who showed no sympathy for the colonies whatsoever. Children did not have rights, only duties. But the parent, too, had responsibilities--the primary of which was to provide for the maximum welfare of the entire family.
Thus a judicious, informed government policy would result in mutual benefit for both England and America. According to John this had been Rockingham's objective from the time he entered office, and now his goal had been achieved. The Rockingham Administration, in John's eyes, served as proof that when the empire functioned as it should, there was no need to discuss matters of right. John seemed to agree heartily with Pitt's position that Parliament possessed all authority over the colonies except that of direct taxation. He apparently considered the Declaratory Act superfluous. Wisely, he never mentioned it in his correspondence with New Hampshire.

John Wentworth could not have been more pleased with the prospects before him in the Spring of 1766. He would have the governorship or the agency of New Hampshire and, in either position, could count on direct access to the first ministers of the realm. Further, because this was the wisest, most prudent administration that could possibly sit at Whitehall, he saw nothing in the future of the American colonies but harmony and prosperity. But even though he had an inside view of British government, John Wentworth was still a novice in British politics. He could not realize, in the midst of the successful campaign in March, that Rockingham's position was weak. This Ministry had not been the King's choice in the first place, but was forced on him for lack of alternatives. Although John might have disagreed, it was generally felt that the Marquis of Rockingham's leadership abilities were, at best, mediocre. There had been divisions in the cabinet from the beginning. From the right, Lord Chancellor Northington had
opposed Rockingham's conciliatory American policy during the
Stamp Act controversy. On the left, the young Duke of Grafton
had taken the office of Secretary of State for the North only
with the idea that Pitt would soon be brought in as leader.
When this failed to materialize, Grafton clearly was dissatisfied.

In April, Grafton resigned. Secretary of State Conway
was leaning in a similar direction. The King and a growing
number of politicians in the House of Commons saw the
Administration breaking apart and were concerned with the rapid
turnover of ministries and what was beginning to seem a chronic
unstable condition of government. George III knew that strong
leadership was necessary and Pitt, because he was independent
of party connections, was his only alternative. Early in July,
using Northington's resignation as a pretext, the King sent
for Pitt who had earlier expressed his willingness to form a
new ministry, on his own terms of course. On July 9,
Rockingham and his ministers were informed by the King that
their administration would continue only until Pitt could
prepare to take over. 27

This news was probably more of a blow to John Wentworth
than to Rockingham, who must have expected it. John now had
some decisions to make. With his patron out of power he would
no longer be able to count on obtaining any office he desired,
whenever he wanted it. He had expected Daniel Pierce to
suggest his availability as sole agent for New Hampshire to
the provincial Assembly. It was their choice, however, and
as yet he had received no word on the matter. He must also
have reconsidered the attractiveness of that office, and of
staying in England, without his close friend at the head of the government. His most obvious and logical step, the one he had leaned toward in the first place, was to take the governorship while he was still sure he could have it. Nearly a year and a half had passed since John had written to Rockingham in behalf of his uncle, and he was still waiting for the Governor's resignation. It appears that that decision was now made for Benning Wentworth. On July 22, one day before Rockingham received official word that his Government was at an end, the Duke of Richmond notified the Board of Trade that a commission and instructions were to be prepared, "The King having been pleased to appoint John Wentworth Esq. to be Captain General and Governor in Chief of New Hampshire."

After the abuses practiced by Benning Wentworth, reluctance of British officials to confer both the governorship and the surveyorship of the woods on the same man, especially another Wentworth, is understandable. More than a year earlier, Thomas Whately at the Treasury suggested the second post for Robert Temple, brother of John Temple, John Wentworth's old friend from Charlestown, Massachusetts, who had held the Lieutenant Governorship of New Hampshire as a sinecure since 1761. Robert was in England at the time. Whately reported that "it is probable Governor Wentworth may be removed from that office, and it is certain that the Governor and the Surveyor of the Woods will never again be the same person." Whately's prediction was not only premature, it was wrong. Before he turned over the reins of government to William Pitt, Rockingham saw to it that John Wentworth was made both Governor
of New Hampshire and Surveyor General of His Majesty's Woods in North America.

John Wentworth's Commission, which was essentially the same as his predecessor's, was sent to the King to be signed on July 29. His instructions would take longer to prepare, however, because they had to be altered to take into account the changes in colonial policy that had occurred since 1741 when Benning Wentworth began his long tenure as Governor of New Hampshire. The appointment was safe now, though, and there was no reason for John to hurry home. With politics out of the way he could take this time to enjoy other aspects of English life, do some traveling, and possibly reflect on the prospect of returning to the far different world of New Hampshire.

Since the great political question of America had died down, John had moved from Westminster to Soho near Golden Square. Soho had not yet gained its bohemian notoriety of more recent days, but it was in the process of becoming London's artists' colony and was not far from Great Queenstreet where John went to have his portrait painted by one Wilson. In all likelihood this was Richard Wilson, one of England's less recognized but more talented artists. Posing with his hand around a scroll representing his new commission, the words "New Hampshire" clearly visible, John intended the portrait as a gift for Rockingham. He apparently did not have time to see it finished, however, for he later had to write to England to ask if it was a "likeness."

In early August John was on his way to spend some time in Yorkshire before departing for New Hampshire in September.
On the twelfth he received a Doctor of Common Law degree from Oxford University, a highly prized honor even if it was primarily the result of his friendship with the Marquis of Rockingham and his recent appointment as governor of one of England's colonies. By early September John had reached the north country and taken up residence at Bretton Hall near Wakefield, the home of Sir Thomas Wentworth, High Sheriff of Yorkshire and another distant relative. He was pleased to hear from Daniel Pierce that New Hampshire had chosen him permanent joint agent, with Barlow Trecothick, but of course now he would not be able to accept the position. He did, though, recommend that Trecothick be retained. He thought the London merchant the "properest and most capable Man" for the job and would urge him to accept it.

John had been gratified at New Hampshire's restraint in celebrating the repeal of the Stamp Act, and he was glad to hear that the legislature had voted to send addresses of thanks to the King and Parliament. He was somewhat miffed, though, at the Assembly's failure to send a similar note of gratitude to Rockingham who, he still strongly insisted, was the primary benefactor in the good fortune of the colonies. That was the least they could have done, he wrote to Pierce, although he had also hoped for a vote commissioning a statue or a full-length portrait of the former First Lord of the Treasury. The fact that Rockingham was no longer in office was not an excuse, either, because future ministers would look to see if the Americans had appreciated what had been done for them. Of more personal matters, John could now tell Pierce that the
Masonian question was looking better, and that he hoped to have the proprietors' claim "upon a good footing" before he left England. That would not be long for he planned to be in New Hampshire by November.35

But as had happened so many times before during his years in England, John's planned departure for home was delayed. It is difficult to know exactly what kept him, although a reluctance to leave behind the close friends and the familiarity with English society and culture that he had cultivated is certainly understandable. Part of the reason, though, may lie in the aid he found necessary to provide for his sixteen year old cousin, Samuel Wentworth, son of his uncle, Samuel, of Boston. Young Samuel had been studying in England when news arrived in October of his father's death. The Reverend Henry Caner, Rector of King's Chapel in Boston, wrote to John asking for help so that the boy might continue his studies and not have to return home due to lack of funds. Caner was especially hopeful that John's influence might gain Samuel a fellowship at Oxford where he was planning to enroll in the fall. John was happy to do what he could and his connections did mean something. Following Samuel's matriculation in early November, Caner wrote to John that he was "well satisfy'd in the measures you have taken for his introduction to the university, and indeed greatly obliged to you for opening to him a prospect, perhaps beyond what my small interest might have accomplish'd."36

December found John Wentworth still in England. He was now at Bath, likely awaiting passage from nearby Bristol. On the eleventh he met with another American, Nathaniel Whitaker,
who represented Eleazar Wheelock's Indian charity school at Lebanon, Connecticut. Whitaker, with Sampson Occom, had left for England late the previous year to raise money for the school. John had first learned of this fund raising campaign when his father, Mark Hunking Wentworth, wrote to introduce Wheelock's emissaries and to request any aid his son could afford them on their mission. In July, John had discussed the matter with Occom, one of Wheelock's star Indian pupils, now a minister traveling throughout Britain delivering learned sermons designed to impress the worth of the project on doubting Englishmen. Because the school's present buildings were inadequate and the province of Connecticut had been completely overtaken by white civilization, Wheelock sought money for a future move to a more appropriate location nearer the source of prospective Indian students. Also under consideration was the addition to the school of a college so that Wheelock might complete the education of his pupils and prepare Christian missionaries, both red and white, for work among the natives.

In July, John was most concerned with his own future. Now, though, with his own course determined and ready to return to America, he was able to give Wheelock's plan more thought. He summoned Nathaniel Whitaker to Bath and, joining a list of prominent subscribers headed by Lord Dartmouth, made a pledge of twenty-one pounds to the school. He also offered to make a public statement in behalf of the project which he did in Bristol on December 16. Most important, he expressed his desire to see the school located in New Hampshire and, as Governor, he promised Whitaker the grant of a township if
Wheelock should decide to move to his province. The possibility of a college being added to the school may also have been mentioned to Wentworth at this time, making the scheme appear especially advantageous for a frontier province like New Hampshire. Although John had been indifferent as an undergraduate, his attitude toward education now showed signs of the mature, urbane, well-traveled man who for several years had moved within the highest political and social circles of the British Empire.

When John Wentworth did finally board ship in mid-January, 1767, he was a considerably different person from the young, inexperienced colonial who had left home three years earlier. Not a small part of the transformation was traceable to a fortuitous chance meeting and subsequent friendship with one of England's great lords, the Marquis of Rockingham. John had gained polish, prestige, and important political offices, but these externals were not the only result of this close relationship. During this time Rockingham had risen to the pinnacle of English government and politics and John held him in high esteem, one is tempted to say, as a younger brother might view an older one. Certainly Rockingham provided a personal and political model worthy of emulation. It seems not unreasonable then that, in addition to the specific favors he bestowed on his friend from America, Rockingham also imparted certain English political principles and provided an example of a particular standard of conduct for persons holding high government office.
Rockingham and his political associates were adamant upholders of the old whig view. Once the insurgents, but now long established and increasingly reactionary, the whigs believed, above all, in the supremacy of Parliament. Because they could conceive of no exception to this principle in any part of the British Empire, the whigs could not accept the American argument that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies directly. This also was why the Rockingham Whigs, though sympathetic to the colonial situation, could sponsor the Declaratory Act which proclaimed Parliamentary sovereignty over the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." John Wentworth's ideas were generally in harmony with this position. He certainly believed in upholding Parliamentary authority and he had warned his friends in New Hampshire not to petition against the Stamp Act on the basis of right. Yet there are indications, at least in respect to the colonies, that John could not follow the whig view to its furthest extension. He himself had not shied completely away from arguing colonists' rights when discussing the Stamp Act in England. He also claimed close accord with the position of William Pitt who, unlike the Rockingham Whigs, was not afraid to resort to Lockean principles of government. When Pitt spoke in the Commons declaring Parliament's total legislative sovereignty over the colonies, but denying it the constitutional right to lay internal taxes on a people not represented in that body, it is apparent that John agreed with both parts of this assertion for he stated that Pitt had "happily struck out the true distinction on what the Question rested." John believed, with
Pitt, that direct taxation was at least one area in which Parliament did not have full authority over America. And in spite of his aversion to the colonial demonstrations against the Stamp Act, John was willing to concede that "the colonists refus'd submission to arbitrary impositions from noble principles of native unalienable Liberty which held property sacred." So although he was in general agreement with the old whig principle of the supremacy of Parliament, he could not carry it to the ultimate claim of the Declaratory Act. His constitutional view was thus somewhat at odds with that of Rockingham and his whig followers, but this was not a significant factor in their relationship because neither Wentworth nor Rockingham were much concerned with constitutional arguments. Much more important than specific political beliefs in its influence on John, was Rockingham's personal approach to politics and government.

Historians generally agree that the Marquis of Rockingham lacked the requisite political skills and driving ambition to be a great leader. He was preeminently a private man, but found himself in the government's highest position out of a strong sense of public duty that was an integral part of his role as one of England's leading landlords. His political rise was also attributable to the fact that he was the only one of Newcastle's close supporters who himself generated allegiance and was able to hold that group together. Rockingham had a reputation for fairness, honesty, and open-handed dealing. He had not the will to bully or threaten political opponents, and he believed government functioned
best under the direction of leaders tied together by respect and mutual confidence. That trust could best be engendered, he felt, by ending old vendettas and minimizing factional differences. For this reason he was willing to bring the great Pitt into office and also supporters of Grenville, Bute, and Bedford. Upon becoming Rockingham's private secretary in 1765, Edmund Burke characterized his new employer as "a man of honour and integrity." The Marquis had, as a recent biographer has noted, a predilection for "the straight fair courses."40

At the local level, in his own county, Rockingham was known as a public spirited man, interested in progress and improvement and the general welfare of the citizenry. He was a practical man who took a broad view and fixed on courses that would prove profitable in the future. This was the outlook he brought to the administration of the country and the empire. Rockingham was concerned with Britain's security vis-à-vis her continental and colonial rivals. He realized that the country's strength lay in the smooth functioning of its imperial system, a condition not fostered by the discord between England and her North American colonies over the Stamp Act. Neither, as he recognized, was the colonial problem unrelated to difficulties at home. From his Yorkshire days Rockingham had a strong interest in mercantile and manufacturing affairs, an important factor in his close contact with the merchants during the Stamp Act crisis.41 He was well aware of the potential trouble in an economic downturn that left thousands of hungry laborers out of work. The key to avoiding
these foreign and domestic dangers, in the eyes of Rockingham, was a harmonious empire ensured by well-reasoned policies characterized by moderation and an eye to the good of the entire system. He might believe in the total sovereignty of Parliament over the colonies, but he would go to almost any length to avoid a confrontation over the issue.

Lord Rockingham's perception of the role and problems of Britain's empire reinforced and confirmed John Wentworth's own ideas. Again and again John applauded the first minister's painstaking efforts to find an answer to the colonial problem. Most praiseworthy, in his eyes, was Rockingham's far-sighted determination to arrive at a solution that would benefit both England and the colonies. John strongly believed that the decision for relief derived from "motives of Equity and Policy" and was based on "a knowledge of our real abilities and Inclinations." Any new regulations, he asserted, were designed "for the reciprocal welfare and connection of the Whole."

Under Rockingham's close scrutiny, according to John, "the mutual interest of both Countries was diligently and impartially investigated, and the gross absurdity of separating it appear'd plainer than every other thing." He obviously agreed with Rockingham's emphasis on the need for mutual consideration and compatibility within the empire. Yet the two men's ideas on this subject did not flow in one direction only—that is, from Rockingham to Wentworth. In his description of America written for Rockingham in early September, 1765, John Wentworth had stressed that the welfare of Britain and the empire could not be separated from that of the colonies. It is definitely
possible that he was the first to firmly plant this idea in
Rockingham's mind, certainly in such cogent and convincing
terms and from the first hand knowledge of a colonist's experi-
ence. Because of this and that he also seems to have been the
first to recommend repeal to Rockingham, John Wentworth may
well have been the most important colonial involved in the
repeal of the Stamp Act, Benjamin Franklin included. However,
he was more than willing to give all credit to Rockingham who,
from an informed viewpoint, had determined on a wise policy
and, with ceaseless effort, skillfully guided it to fruition.
John believed that this, in sharp contrast to the efforts of
the previous ministry, was the way the government of the empire
should be conducted.

But an enlightened, concerned administration in England
was not the entire answer to a harmonious and profitable empire.
One of the keys to the success of the colonies and thus the
time, John had earlier told his patron, was the appointment
of "disinterested, diligent and faithful" governors. Now,
at the age of twenty-nine, he was a governor and would have
his chance to help make the system work. How would he conduct
himself in that office? Evidence indicates that the Marquis
of Rockingham's philosophy of effective leadership had made a
profound impression on him. The general terms John used to
describe his intended behavior were strikingly similar to those
both he and others employed when referring to Rockingham. John
asserted that he would "endeavor with assiduous application to
discover with honest disinterested zeal to pursue and with
prudent firmness to maintain the general prosperity of the
Province," Later, he stated that as governor, "a conduct plain, open and sincere, free from all cunning and intrigue, form'd upon Principles of integrity and pursued with prudent firmness, must inevitably accomplish the End and conciliate the respect and affection of the People."\(^{44}\) Consciously or unconsciously, John Wentworth seems to have found in the Marquis of Rockingham a desirable model for the conduct of high public office. If not only the government in England, but also those of the colonies, were led by executives as "honest," "prudent," "assiduous," and "disinterested" as Rockingham, able to maintain his "integrity" and his "firmness," the British Empire would achieve every hoped for design of "power and wealth,"\(^{45}\) to the benefit of all within it. This happy eventuality would, from John Wentworth's point of view, preclude any further debates over constitutional rights, an issue, he believed, strictly secondary to the proper operation of the empire. Thus the volatile question of limits on Parliamentary sovereignty in the colonies was not one he felt the need to commit to deep personal introspection or to definitively refine in his own mind. It would never come up if moderate, well-reasoned policies, such as those of the Marquis of Rockingham, prevailed on both sides of the Atlantic. In January, 1767, as his ship set sail for America, John was ready to do his part, and although his patron and friend was now out of office, he must have hoped that the new administration would have the foresight to follow Rockingham's example and do theirs.
NOTES

CHAPTER V

1 Derek H. Watson, "John Wentworth's Description of the American Colonies in 1765," Historical New Hampshire, 27(Fall, 1972):141-66.

2 During the fall it was well known that Rockingham was in favor of relief for America. By December he seems to have made a definite decision for repeal. See Paul Langford, The First Rockingham Administration, 1765-1766 (Oxford, 1975), 126-30. Shortly after the Stamp Act repeal, in March, 1766, Wentworth testified before the Commons Committee on American Papers in favor of the suggestion he had made to Rockingham the previous September that the molasses duty be reduced. In keeping with his practical approach to the empire, he argued on the grounds that such a reduction would allow the colonies to purchase more manufactured goods from Britain. See P.D.G. Thomas, British Politics and the Stamp Act Crisis: The First Phase of the American Revolution, 1763-1767 (Oxford, 1975), 258.


5 Gipson, 10: Thunder-CLOUDS Gather in the West, 302-303; George Meserve to Wentworth, Sept. 27, 1765, Wentworth Papers, box 1, fol. 4; Nathaniel Adams, Annals of Portsmouth (Hampton, N.H., 1971 /1825/), 212; George Meserve to Secretary of State Conway, July 31, 1766, Public Record Office, C.0.5/934.


7 George Meserve to Wentworth, Sept. 27, 1765, Wentworth Papers, box 1, fol. 4; Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism, 52.
8NHSP, 7:92.

9Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, Nov. 29, 1765, Masonian Papers, New Hampshire Archives, 3:36.

10Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 290-324.

11The following discussion of politics in England relating to the Stamp Act is based on Langford, First Rockingham Administration, 109-148, and Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 371-414.


13Rockingham is quoted in Langford, First Rockingham Administration, 111.


15Quoted in Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 382n.

16Lawrence Gipson states that "British trade, as a result of the American boycott, was languishing by the fall of 1765." (10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 381.) However, because the first official boycott of British goods was not announced until October 31 in New York City (Boston did not follow suit until December), this movement was not responsible for the "languishing" British-American trade or the decision of Barlow Trecothick and the London merchants in early December to seek support from other towns for repeal of the Stamp Act. Trade had been slow for more than a year and this fact, along with threats from American merchants that payment of bills might have to cease, was what moved the London merchants. (Langford, First Rockingham Administration, 117-19.) As news of the boycotts began to reach England in December, however, it undoubtedly did play a role in the encouraging response of the other towns to Trecothick's circular.

17Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers, Portsmouth Atheneum, Portsmouth, N.H. Pitt is quoted in Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 79.
Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.

Quoted in Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 383.


Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers. The salary of the New Hampshire agent is given in Kammen, Rope of Sand, 47.

Conway is quoted in Gipson, 10: Thunder-Clouds Gather in the West, 395.

George T. Keppel, Earl of Albemarle, Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham and his Contemporaries (London, 1852), 1:320; Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.

Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1765, Pierce Papers.


John at this time seemed to be trying to cover all possible bases. There are indications that in 1766 he successfully solicited a position as Deputy Post Master General in America. This may have been because he had not heard from New Hampshire about the agency and Benning Wentworth still had not resigned. See Theodore Jervey, "Barlow Trecothick," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 32 (July, 1931): 159.
Most accounts of Benning Wentworth state that he resigned his office. However, I can find no evidence that he actually did resign of his own volition. In February John seemed to have lost patience with his uncle because he had not yet given up his office. (See Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, February 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.) In Benning Wentworth's correspondence with the Board of Trade prior to his nephew's appointment as Governor in July, there is no mention of resignation. In his letter to the Board, Richmond does state that John Wentworth is replacing Benning Wentworth "who has resigned." (PRO, C.0.5/928) It seems probable that this was merely for appearances. Writing to Jeremy Belknap years later John noted that "it appeared" that Benning "resigned in favor of his nephew." (Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, 6th Ser. 4(1891): 498.) One of the reasons John did not immediately leave for home may have been to allow time for his uncle to receive word of his "resignation" and make necessary preparations.


PRO, C.0.5/942.


Wentworth to Hugh Hall Wentworth, Aug. 5, 1766, Wentworth Papers, box 1, fol. 4; Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886 (Oxford, 1891): 1525; Wentworth to Thomas Smith, July 17, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 16-17. John had already received a similar honorary degree earlier in his stay in Britain from Aberdeen University.

Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Sept. 10, 1766, Pierce Papers; John Wentworth, The Wentworth Genealogy (Boston, 1878), 1:xxv; NHSP, 7:106-107. Wentworth had earlier informed Pierce that he would never accept the agency as a joint position. This does not seem to have been a result of misgivings about Trecothick, but rather of a desire for independence, efficiency, and possibly a larger salary. See Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.
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38. On Rockingham and the whig view see "The Rockingham Whigs," chapter two of G. H. Guttridge, English Whiggism and the American Revolution (Berkeley, 1966 /1942/), 17-57. On the difficulty of defining the terms "whig" and "tory" during this period see Watson, George III, 58.

39. Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.


41. Hoffman (Marquis, ix) stresses Rockingham's foreign policy concerns. Rockingham's interest in commercial affairs and his relationship with the merchants is discussed in detail in Langford, First Rockingham Administration, 109-24.

42. Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.


44. Wentworth to Daniel Pierce, Nov. 29, 1765, and Feb. 15, 1766, Pierce Papers.

45. "Power and Wealth" were Wentworth's own words to describe the desirable ends of a successful empire. Watson, "John Wentworth's Description," 164.
CHAPTER VI

MAKING THE THEORY WORK:
NEW HAMPSHIRE AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE, 1767-1770

John Wentworth again crossed the Atlantic at the worst possible time of the year, winter. His duties as Surveyor General of the Woods dictated South Carolina as his destination instead of New England, but even the more southerly route did not ease the rigors of the voyage. Originally scheduled to stop at Lisbon, the ship was prevented from making port by "violent Winds" and driven on to Teneriffe in the Canaries where it took on fresh water and food. The vessel proved unwieldy with its heavy load of passengers and animals including both servants and horses John had brought from Yorkshire, some from Wentworth-Woodhouse as gifts from the Marquis of Rockingham. This fact, combined with strong westerly winds, resulted in an excruciatingly slow and hazardous voyage. Fortunately, one of John's friends in London had fortified him with a supply of wine which he found a great relief for "the fatigue of Bad weather and other maritime distress." On March 22, 1767, sixty days out of Teneriffe, John's ship landed at Charleston. It is not surprising that this "very Long and distressing Passage," as he described it, made "four Days rest at Charleston absolutely necessary."

On his fifth day in South Carolina, after he had rested and could walk without feeling as though he were still on the deck of a rolling ship, John headed for the interior to begin his duties as Surveyor General of the Woods in North America.
This had been his purpose in not sailing directly for home. Traveling northward from Charleston would give him the opportunity to inspect the timber in the other colonies and register his commission as Surveyor General with the other provincial governors. New Hampshire and northern New England were the source of the great white pine for main masts, but the all important naval stores—tar, pitch, turpentine—were products of southern forests. On his tour John also found that the yellow pine provided straight, strong logs for smaller masts, yards, spars, and bowsprits, and he reported favorably on the "Strength and Durability" of the live oak, a wood useful for shipbuilding. Unlike Benning Wentworth, his nephew took this job seriously and was intent on justifying the trust and responsibility that had been placed in him.

Carrying letters of introduction that he had collected in England, John set out for New Hampshire. In North Carolina he made the acquaintance of Governor William Tryon and decided to ship two of his English mares home by water. That was a mistake, as he later discovered, for although he paid seven guineas for the passage, one of the horses starved to death on the way to New England. In Virginia, John was extended the hospitality of one of the South's oldest and most prestigious landed families. The Byrds of Westover had come to epitomize the aristocratic southern planter class that was familiar to inhabitants of all the colonies. Pious New Englanders tended to consider the way of life of Virginia gentlemen such as the Byrds frivolous and morally objectionable, but after moving among England's elite for several years, John Wentworth had a
less provincial view. Besides, he enjoyed cards and thorough-bred horses as much as did his host, William Byrd III. Westover, fronting directly on the broad James River, was no Wentworth-Woodhouse. Nevertheless, its large central block, accentuated by a high hipped roof, pedimented dormers, finely carved doorway, and extended wings on either side made it a perfect example of Georgian symmetry and certainly one of the finest buildings in the American colonies. Westover would not have been out of place anywhere in England, and it is not surprising that John felt at home there.

Apparently assuming they would fare better by water than land, Wentworth left three more of his English mares with Byrd to be shipped home with the first vessel out. But before he left Virginia he bought four more horses from Colonel Peter Randolph, Surveyor General of the Customs for the southern district, with whom he stayed at Chatsworth, Randolph's estate near Williamsburg. Horses and servants in tow, John moved on through the tidewater of the Chesapeake to Annapolis, the capital of Maryland. Unfortunately, he arrived while the government was in session and, as he later exclaimed, found Annapolis "the only Town I had or have seen on this Continent where neither Money or Interest or Intreaty cou'd procure the least Accomodation for my Family or so much as a Single bed for myself." Governor Horatio Sharpe came to the rescue, however, and opened up his house to his fellow colonial governor.²

By the end of May John was in Philadelphia, then across New Jersey to New York City where he enjoyed a rest at the home of William Bayard in Greenwich, overlooking the Hudson River
from lower Manhattan Island. John spent this welcome respite from the weariness of travel wandering in Mrs. Bayard's garden, turning the music for Bayard's daughter as she sang and accompanied herself on the harpsicord, and just musing on the "pleasant views over to Hoebuck." Not eager to return to the dusty road, John boarded a ship in New York and enjoyed a leisurely three-day passage to Boston. There he planned to call on Joseph Harrison whom he had last seen in England. Harrison, like Wentworth, had been one of the colonists whom Rockingham had turned to for advice during the furor over the Stamp Act. Serving as Rockingham's secretary for a period, he had lived at Wentworth-Woodhouse and become a close friend of John's. For his trouble he had received the post of Collector of Customs at Boston where he returned prior to Wentworth's appointment. Now John was looking forward to seeing Harrison again, but when he arrived at his home discovered that his friend had been ill and had taken a trip out of town for his health.  

John had sent a note to Benning Wentworth from New York to let him know that he was on his way. From Boston he wrote another, giving his expected time of arrival in just a few days. Thus he would not catch the province unaware and would allow officials time to prepare a proper welcome for their new governor. John must have felt a mixture of excitement and curiosity as he and his entourage rode north from Boston toward New Hampshire on Saturday morning, the thirteenth of June, 1767. He had left as a young merchant. He was returning, still young, not yet thirty, but as governor of the province. Would he
recognize his many friends and relations? Would they know him—had his appearance changed much during his absence of more than three years? Would people treat him differently now that he was governor? He must have been anxious to see New Hampshire and Portsmouth—to see if they were as he remembered. He knew he was getting closer as the Massachusetts hardwoods gradually gave way to the tall straight pines of the north. When he reached the New Hampshire line about noon, he was greeted by a troop of guards and another of horse, some members of the Council, undoubtedly including Daniel Pierce, and a committee chosen by the Assembly. They escorted him the rest of the way to Portsmouth where he passed through throngs of people eager to catch a glimpse of their new Governor. On reaching the State House he was saluted by the First Regiment of Militia. There he produced his commission which was read to the people by the High Sheriff. John then went inside to the Council Chamber where he and the members of the Council took their oaths of office. Finally, he read a standard proclamation ordering all officers to carry on in their positions of government until notified further.

With the formalities over, it was time to celebrate. Reports from the cannon at Fort William and Mary could be heard down river, along with "three vollies of small arms ... fired by the militia and three huzzas given by the multitude." An "elegant entertainment" had been planned for the occasion and Wentworth, the Council, and the chief magistrates dined together. Of course everyone was anxious to meet the new governor and John received a seemingly endless procession of people. After
his rough two-month voyage followed by nearly three more months on the road and through the forests from South Carolina, John would probably have appreciated some rest and solitude more than anything else. It is not surprising that he should exclaim, "I wish to God that I was escap'd from all this Dust, Parade, shew and Ceremony." Nevertheless, the day was a success. As reported by one newspaper: "Such ardency and emulation prevailed among all ranks on this occasion, as gave the most promising hopes, that his Excellency's government would be crowned with the most cordial affections of the people, whose happiness and his own were now so intimately blended." The only negative note among the celebrations was the absence of Benning Wentworth. This was not surprising, though, for it was common knowledge that his resignation had been forced. Apparently no one missed him and he undoubtedly was thankful that he could claim his gout as an excuse for remaining at Little Harbor.  

The euphoric hopes and expectations marking Governor John Wentworth's first day in New Hampshire dictated an almost certain letdown. Even so, the passage of time did surprisingly little to diminish the respect and admiration of the people for their new governor. Some months later a prominent citizen of Portsmouth declared: "May we not expect Happiness under the administration of a Governour of an Ingenious, amiable, generous, Hospitable Disposition: The People in general are pursuaded they may." This was not an uncharacteristic comment about John Wentworth. In fact, his personality was in large part responsible for his popularity, which in turn seems to
have been a major factor in his success as governor. John Wentworth was warm, gregarious, personable. These qualities, combined with his generally open and forthright manner, played a large role in keeping the people loyal to provincial government throughout nearly his entire term as governor. His success in this respect is all the more remarkable when considering that his tenure as Governor of New Hampshire coincided with a period when royal authority in the colonies was increasingly an object of suspicion and fear.

John Wentworth did not command respect, as some men seem to, by his physical size. From the few references to his stature that exist, we have to conclude that he was short, probably somewhat stout. The adjective most commonly used next to his name in this regard was "little." At the same time he was a handsome man and perhaps this partly explains why, unlike some other figures in history, his lack of height can not be associated with any undesirable trait of personality or character. In fact, references to his size made directly to his face seem not to have bothered him. On one occasion, during one of his frequent expeditions into the interior, his host in a frontier cabin observed unabashedly that the Governor seemed to be "getting leetler and leetler." Unoffended, John just grinned. Another story is told about a stranger to Portsmouth who, having heard about John Wentworth, was poking around in the area of his house. Peering into the stables, he found a fellow taking care of the horses and, after expressing his interest in the Governor, felt compelled to repeat what people commonly said about John Wentworth where he came
from. "They say Johnny is short and thick," the stranger declared, and "that he is fond of his wine, but on the whole a pretty clever sort of a fellow—how I should like to see him."

The man tending the horses said he thought that could be arranged and, after escorting the visitor into the house and showing him several of the richly decorated rooms, held out his hand and introduced himself as the Governor. Only John Wentworth's affability kept the man from being completely embarrassed.

These incidents in themselves are unimportant. As reflections of the character and demeanor of John Wentworth, however, they take on significance. The picture that emerges is one of a man of unusual equanimity, an extremely well-balanced individual, confident in himself with no need to retreat behind a facade of contrived hauteur that, given his station and office, no one would have faulted him for. Unaffected he could mingle comfortably with shopkeepers, farmers, or woodsmen without making them ill at ease. This was a far cry from the aloofness of his predecessor, Benning Wentworth, and, indeed, from the expected behavior of royal governors in general. At the same time, as might be expected from his experience in England, John was equally at home in the most polite and sophisticated society. Neither was he out of place in learned circles. He was intelligent with an inquiring mind and broad interests, as was indicated in his treatise on the colonies drawn up for Rockingham at the time of the Stamp Act controversy. Jeremy Belknap, the first and still one of the best historians of New Hampshire and a contemporary of
Wentworth's, owed much to the Governor, not only for political material but also for valuable information about the natural condition of the province, its flora, fauna, geography, and topography. As one admirer noted, John Wentworth "united the erudition of the scholar and the polite accomplishments of the gentleman." 8

The fact that John Wentworth was comfortable at all levels of society does not mean that he was a democrat, interested in social change ahead of his time. By colonial standards he was an aristocrat. He accepted his position and fostered no levelling ideas. He was not an ideological person; he had no desire to change the status quo. Perhaps part of his personal flexibility can be attributed to his youth. Young people tend to dismiss social differences more readily than those whom the passage of many years has set more firmly in their ways. And his age gave him the vigor to do things that older men might not. The sight of the young Governor galloping through the woods on his horse, on his way to inspect a stand of virgin pine, stopping to chat amiably or inquire how the crops were coming, undoubtedly endeared him to the people of the province.

But youth and vitality alone only partially explain his popularity. The focus needs to be, rather, on the overall character of the man. John Wentworth was a rare individual. He seems to have been one of those few persons who can be completely natural regardless of the situation. He put up no barriers, he had nothing to hide. He listened as well as talked and people sensed that his interest in them was genuine. He
was open and honest and it is not difficult to see why he inspired trust and affection. It is not surprising that John Wentworth and the Marquis of Rockingham got along so well because they appear to have been similar in nature. It would be difficult to say how much of an influence Rockingham was, but it is relatively certain that what John observed in England at least reinforced his own beliefs and behavior. In fact a piece of advice that he gave to a cousin while still in the mother country might easily be seen as a motto that John held up for himself to live and govern by. In 1766 he recommended to Hugh Hall Wentworth that in his dealings he make "the plainest appearance and the most open declaration, as it will operate more in your behalf." 9 John Wentworth did, for the most part, follow his own advice. By doing so he laid a solid foundation of respect and trust that served him in good stead through the inevitable periods of friction and the difficult times that lay ahead.

Yet those times, from 1767 to 1775, were too hazardous to allow any representative of royal authority in America to go unscathed. The one inescapable fact that affected, to one degree or another, nearly every aspect of John Wentworth's administration as governor was the continuing trouble between Britain and America. Although Wentworth preferred personally to operate in an open and forthright manner, the growing friction between the colonies and England at times forced him to act otherwise in the realm of government. Any person occupying an executive position of government with its inherent broad authority, cannot realistically expect to avoid making enemies.
Those that do harbor such hopes are often forced into subterfuge and duplicity, eventually leading to their downfall. John Wentworth was not afraid of making enemies if the cause was just. He did, however, desperately want to reverse the direction of the slowly widening chasm between America and Great Britain. He had great love and respect both for his native New Hampshire and the mother country, and to maintain harmony between the two, the object uppermost in his mind, he felt justified, when necessary, in resorting to secret political manipulations. Unfortunately, these few uncharacteristic actions, when discovered, served only to widen the breach further. John Wentworth was truly a man caught in the middle, trying to please and reconcile both sides. In this he was as successful as any governor on the continent, but he could not know that in the long run the situation was irreconcilable.

One of John's first concerns, naturally, was his place of residence. Because New Hampshire had been without its own governor until 1741, the province had been under no obligation to provide a dwelling for an executive. When the governors came up from Boston they normally rented rooms in a large brick mansion owned by the Packer family at the corner of Pleasant and Court Streets. Benning Wentworth had spent most of his time at his own rambling mansion at Little Harbor and so provincial taxpayers had again been relieved of the obligation of paying for a house for the governor. Now, however, there was a new governor, one who did not own a home. Rather than buying or building a house, the legislature chose the less expensive expedient of renting one, especially since the
Governor's father, Mark Hunking Wentworth, offered one of his properties at the highly reasonable rate of sixty-seven pounds a year. Several years later, the next owner complained that this was less than half the lawful interest on the money invested in the house.11

The house itself was a large frame structure built only a few years earlier. Two-and-a-half stories with a hipped roof, dormer windows, and some classical detailing, it was typical of homes owned by prosperous merchants in New England's seacoast towns. From its location on a rise on Pleasant Street, about two-thirds of the way from the center of Portsmouth toward South Bridge, John enjoyed the view "over the town and down the river to the boundless Atlantic Ocean." In the back, a large garden with walks and ornamental shrubs sloped away more than 400 feet to the South Pond. There John liked to stroll in the mornings, taking in the rural setting of fields accentuated by the sunshine sparkling on the ripples of the small body of saltwater. Along one side of the garden stood the coach house and the stables where John kept his horses, one of his great passions.12

In keeping with what he thought proper for a provincial governor, John was intent on making the interior of the house as fine as possible. He ordered furniture and personally selected the wallpaper. Window drapes he obtained from London and also pictures for his walls. The desired elegance was completed with 600 feet of oak boards for wainscoting, nearly enough for every room in the house. The larder was stocked with Yorkshire hams and the cellar with cider and Portuguese
wine. John of course had his English servants to tend the house, cook, and take care of the stables. The final touch was added by two black slaves named Romulus and Remus who played the French Horn.  

John clearly was trying to mimic as best he could the splendor he had become accustomed to in England, and he was not afraid to admit it. He told his friend, Joseph Harrison, of his attempts to create a "Lillipution" Wentworth-Woodhouse in Portsmouth. But in spite of his efforts—and he certainly was more than adequately prepared for any entertaining that might be required of a royal governor in New Hampshire—he was never satisfied with his residence. After Wentworth-Woodhouse, and even Westover, the house may have seemed small, and admittedly it was not as fine as his own brother's house a few blocks away on the waterfront, or as large as the mansion built recently by Samuel Moffatt, a local merchant. Nevertheless, it hardly deserved to be called a "little Cabbin" or a "small hut" as Wentworth referred to it simultaneously on one occasion. Three years after he moved in, John asked the Assembly to consider "some means to Render this or some other house more convenient and Equal for my residence." Although a committee was appointed to look into building or buying another house for the Governor, nothing ever came of it and three years later John was still urging the legislature to provide "a Province House in which the Governor can reside with comfort to himself and respect to the Government." This was one point on which he was destined to be disappointed for the duration of his term.
Another, and potentially more serious, point of friction between the Governor and the legislature, one that also was never resolved according to John Wentworth's wishes, was the question of his salary. When he met his first Assembly on July 2, 1767, following his instructions he made a request for "an adequate, honorable, and permanent salary." Two days later the House voted £300 for the cost of Wentworth's trip from England, but obviously realizing that the important matter of the salary would not be settled quickly, the members postponed debate on it until after the adjournment demanded by the agricultural season. When they reconvened again in late August there was obviously little sentiment for granting the Governor a permanent salary. No matter how well-liked a governor was in America, provincial assemblies were extremely jealous of the one power, if only implicit, that they held over their executive: that of annually granting his salary. New Hampshire was no exception. The House voted Wentworth £700 for one year.\(^{15}\)

One of the reasons given for not making the grant permanent was the expectation that Britain might institute a policy of paying royal governors out of the American customs revenue. The preamble to the recently passed Townshend Revenue Acts stated, as a sort of veiled threat, that this would be done "in such Provinces where it shall be found necessary." Unlike wealthier, more heavily populated colonies like neighboring Massachusetts, New Hampshire saw this as more of a blessing than a threat. What power the annual salary grant held over the governor they would happily give up for a reduction
in taxes. As Wentworth well knew, his was a poor province. The salary of £700 was among the lowest in all the American colonies and, although he undoubtedly considered it neither "adequate" nor "honorable," he could not have been surprised. Had it been permanent he would have been satisfied, but despite objections by himself and the Council, nothing changed. The House was divided on the question, but Speaker Peter Gilman finally turned the vote against a permanent salary. The Governor did not forget this. Although he and Gilman ostensibly were friends and he later nominated the Speaker for a Council seat, John disclosed to a confidant in England that he had offered the post because Gilman had been "troublesome" in the Assembly. Among Wentworth relatives and friends in the Council he would have little opportunity to cause trouble.16

The following year John Wentworth was again voted £700 for one year only, the reason still given as the expectation that payment might be made out of the customs revenue. Although Whitehall had long been used to this situation in the American colonies, John felt compelled to apologize for this breach of his official instructions in a lengthy report to Secretary of State Shelburne. He explained that because of rising opposition in America to the Townshend duties he did not think this was a good time to press the Assembly on the issue of a permanent salary. He did find somewhat ironic, though, the fact that the House used as its reason this same Townshend Act.17 As it became apparent in succeeding years that New Hampshire's legislators had no intention of granting him a permanent salary, Wentworth, as much as they, began to hope
that the home government would indeed see its way to paying him out of the customs revenue. In 1770 he expressed this to the Earl of Hillsborough, then Colonial Secretary, and added "I am the more encourag'd in my hopes of a royal Independent establishment, as I have heard the same is amply granted for New York and Massachusetts bay" and especially as New Hampshire had "steadily adhered to the most perfect good Conduct, and testified their respect to the Laws of Great Britain, when all the others were thrown into confusion and combinations against the commerce of the Mother Country." Lord Dunmore and Thomas Hutchinson, the governors of New York and Massachusetts, had been granted salaries from England, but precisely because there was trouble in their provinces. It was cruel irony that John Wentworth did not realize that as long as New Hampshire remained peaceful and obedient, he stood no chance of receiving an independent salary.18

In addition to his salary, John received £400 annually as Surveyor General of the Woods and approximately £100 from fees that were normal perquisites of a royal governor. This came to a total of £1200. In spite of the fact that he told an English friend that an annual salary of £1200 pounds in America made anyone "equal to a noble Man in Europe," he still complained to the Assembly that his salary "hath not any one year come near to my support," and had forced him to "Retire to my own Estate in the Country." It is difficult to understand how building a lavish home in the interior, fifty miles from Portsmouth, helped him live on a more reasonable budget, but even without this he would have found it difficult to stay
within his means. Wentworth had returned from England with expensive tastes; the horses, servants, and furnishings of his Portsmouth home were well known. It also took money to maintain the image of the dashing young governor, a role apparently, and not unexpectedly, enjoyed and fostered by John who was not yet thirty when he took office. Shortly after his arrival in New Hampshire he ordered from Thomas Smith in Philadelphia a "Sulky one horse Chair for one person only on Steel Springs, with Wheels at least four Inches lower than our good friend Mr. Foxcroft's, to be painted the lightest Straw Color and gilt Mouldings with my Crest and Cypher ... in a plain Oval without the least Ornament and rather in a small Compass ... the Carriage to be plain and neat." A local minister observed that the Governor "lives in high style" and went on to lament that "too many endeavor to imitate his mode of living, whose circumstances would forbid it."19

John Wentworth's own circumstances could not really support him in the manner to which he was accustomed, but that was not what bothered him most about the salary. He could always find other means for augmenting his income. The size of the salary was secondary to his belief that dependence on the legislature for a yearly grant of money undermined the authority and subverted the power of a royal governor. Little more than a year after he took up the burdens of office he commented that "It is rather to be wonder'd that there are not more Riots, when we consider the natural Imbecility of Colony Government, where every civil Officer from the Governor to the Constable are dependant on the people for annual support."
He went on to complain that it "destroys that respect and confidence necessary to subordination." This situation never changed. During the years prior to the outbreak of war in America, conditions in New Hampshire, at least in comparison to many of the other colonies, seemed too peaceful to the home government to justify an independent salary for the Governor. To John Wentworth, however, the question of his salary remained a small but everpresent element of discord underlying the generally harmonious relations between royal government and the people of his province.

The optimism prevalent in New Hampshire in the summer of 1767 made the salary dispute seem insignificant. John returned as something of a hero since it was well known that he had been close to the administration that repealed the Stamp Act. The same month that he arrived in the province the succeeding administration at Whitehall passed another revenue act that would be of significant consequence to America. But that was unknown at the time and feelings of good will and hope for the future were at their peak, both for the Governor and the people of New Hampshire. John had great faith in the cooperation of the Assembly and the people and wrote to Stephen Apthorp in England, "I am extremely happy in the Universal Esteem of all this Province who emulate each other in obliging me and endeavoring to make my Administration honorable easy and as profitable as they can." This was a good sign. Faith between his colony and Great Britain did not seem to have been shaken too badly by the Stamp Act episode. Now that he was in control himself, he could set about cementing that close
relationship by making New Hampshire an exemplary part of the British Empire as he had told Rockingham it should work, and by fostering the best possible relations between his province and England. John hoped that measures taken in England would match his own for foresight and prudence, and that the theory of a smoothly functioning, profitable, and harmonious Empire would in fact become a reality.

John was fortunate. His plan for New Hampshire coincided with and was greatly aided by a process already occurring naturally. With the end of the French and Indian War and the British acquisition of Canada in the early 1760's, colonists no longer had reason to fear attack on their northern frontier. This fact was especially significant for a previously vulnerable province like New Hampshire. It meant that thousands of acres of virtually virgin land were now open for settlement and cultivation. Migration into the western and northern wilderness areas of the province began even before the Treaty of Paris was signed, and between 1761 and 1775 New Hampshire grew faster than any of the other twelve mainland colonies to the south.

When John Wentworth returned in 1767 the process was well underway, but during his governorship it became even more pronounced. From 1767 to 1773 population increased from 52,000 to 72,000, and by 1774 the Governor estimated it at over 80,000 inhabitants. Most of that increase took place in the west and the north. Between 1767 and 1773 many of the towns in the older, southeastern part of the province grew little at all and some, such as Portsmouth and Durham, actually lost population. In contrast, newer settlements such as those near the Connecticut
River like Charlestown, Keene, Winchester, and Cornish, saw substantial growth. Orford to the north saw its census more than triple during those six years. Although the Wentworths had always been identified with Portsmouth and the seacoast, this strong demographic trend fit perfectly with John Wentworth's plans to make New Hampshire a vital part of Britain's system of empire.

The key to those plans was agriculture. John believed that New Hampshire had a great, but as yet untapped, potential for agricultural production. If this resource were encouraged and developed, it would play a large role in both bringing prosperity to his province and making it a valuable part of the British trade system. As he viewed it in 1768, New Hampshire was all too dependent on its lumber exports. These were carried to the West Indies for rum which was brought back and consumed, the inhabitants of New Hampshire "thereby sinking their labor and not enriching the State," as he explained to the Earl of Shelburne. This was bad not only for the province, but England as well. It made payment for English manufactured goods difficult, subsequently lessened the demand for those items, and made the colonists begin to think in terms of developing their own manufactures, a situation completely antithetical to theorists' views of the proper role of the colonies in the mercantile system.

John felt he had the answer to this problem, that he knew the way to bring New Hampshire back into line with the expectations from Britain and at the same time return prosperity to the inhabitants of the province. "The Land will produce
plentifully Corn, Hemp, Flax, Cattle, and Horses which if encouraged," he wrote to Shelburne, "may be the means to revive, extend and render... [New Hampshire's] Commerce beneficial to Great Britain, which is now of little Value, and tends directly to impoverish the Province." Agricultural production, according to John, had to be fostered so that New Hampshire not only would at last be able to feed itself, but would accumulate a substantial amount of produce for export. He felt that the current unprofitable trade situation would thus be "totally changed, our Export being more natural and more valuable. The demand from England would be augmented and paid for, the Inhabitants be enriched, contented, orderly and industrious."²³

From the perspective of more than 200 years it is difficult to see the large advantage John envisioned in a changeover from a timber to an agricultural exporting economy in New Hampshire. There would be no demand for agrarian products in England. As with lumber, they would in all likelihood find their outlet in the West Indies to be exchanged, like wood products, for molasses and sugar. The effect would seem to be merely the substitution of one commodity for another providing little, if any, improvement in the overall efficiency of the Empire. In New Hampshire, though, John probably did see that such a change would stop the outflow of money paid to other colonies for foodstuffs. He had made this point about all of New England to Rockingham in his report of 1765. This would be an important means of keeping valuable currency in New Hampshire, thus improving purchasing capability for British manufactures. Something else John may have had in mind was the
slow but persistent recession of forest land away from Portsmouth. Although Portsmouth was still the largest exporter of lumber in the colonies, the best timber lands were becoming increasingly distant from the port. By 1772, Falmouth in Maine had replaced the New Hampshire capital as the number one mast shipping center. As Surveyor General of the Woods, John was well aware of this development. Most of his forest surveys were conducted outside of his own province, in Canada and Maine, and on the far side of the Connecticut River. As in so many instances, John may have been looking to the future when another export would be needed to replace the lumber that had for so long been New Hampshire's mainstay.24

Whatever his reasons, Wentworth believed that extensive agrarian development was the key to internal prosperity and harmony with the British trade system. It would also, and he added this important point especially for the edification of those in London, preclude the people in New Hampshire from "forming an Idea or conceiving a practicability of manufacturing even to the remotest periods of futurity."25 On this John Wentworth remained consistent throughout his entire term as governor. He knew the British Government's disapproval of manufacturing in the colonies and he repeatedly discouraged it in New Hampshire. This probably was alien to his natural inclination. In fact it must have been difficult for him to separate agrarian from manufacturing interests. The two went hand in hand in the eyes of enlightened, far seeing men who were concerned with the prosperity and progress of their country. John Wentworth had a good example in the Marquis of
Rockingham's efforts in his home county in England, and all of John's own interests and propensities—curiosity about the environment, enthusiasm for new discoveries and developments, desire for efficient use of resources, not least his abiding affection for New Hampshire and desire to see it prosper—indicate that had there been no official restrictions on manufacturing in America, he would have pursued its advancement as strongly as that of other things.

Shortly after arriving in New Hampshire John took the time to write to Edward Bridgen in London thanking him and the Society of Arts for a number of pamphlets on the production of potash. As this was one of the few manufactures of America that was encouraged from Britain, John had been happy to distribute this literature to producers in his province. A short time later he wrote enthusiastically to Bridgen about the discoveries of one potash manufacturer in New Hampshire who had improved both the quantity and quality, but with no added expense. John believed the man deserved a reward from the government and was writing the Lords of Trade to that effect. This, however, was an exception. His duty, as he fully realized, was to discourage the manufacture of products that might in any way compete with those of the mother country. In 1768 the only product of any consequence that John could find in New Hampshire was linen made from home grown flax. He assured his superiors in England, however, that the native cloth sold at a higher price than the imported, and thus was not competitive. A small amount of iron-work also was carried on, for the necessities of shipbuilding and husbandry, but it too was more
expensive and the delays and problems were interminable. As for the production of wool, an item so jealously guarded by the English industry that every governor's instructions included a separate article forbidding its export from any colony, by any conveyance, "to any other Place whatsoever," John reported that "there is scarce the appearance of it." Over his years as Governor he was consistently able to reassure Whitehall that New Hampshire, in large part due to his vigilance and commitment to the British system of empire, had developed no industry of note. His success stemmed from what he believed to be "the surest and possibly the most eligible mode of discouraging manufacturers," namely, the encouragement of people in agriculture.  

People were entering New Hampshire at a fast enough rate that John Wentworth did not have to promote migration to his province. Nevertheless, he was always anxious to do what he could to augment the flow of eager husbandmen bent on transforming New Hampshire's backcountry wilderness into productive farmland. He did his best to fulfill new requests for land and in at least one instance had a friend in another province recruiting settlers. He was even willing to offer cash bounties as evidenced in 1771 when he told Joseph Trumbull of Connecticut that he would give £400 to thirty families who would settle on the Connecticut River. Neither did he have any prejudice against Indians coming to New Hampshire as long as they conformed to acceptable sedentary, agrarian roles. All were welcome who would help the province meet the goal set for it by the new Governor. That was to make New Hampshire into
an economically sound, contributing member of the British Empire. The way to success was through increased agricultural production for, as John Wentworth believed of his fellow inhabitants, "the produce of Agriculture exported enlarges their ability to pay for British Goods in much greater quantity and perfection than they can acquire in any other mode of employ." The beneficial effect of settlement for British industry was especially true in a wilderness area like New Hampshire because, according to John, it could be twenty years before these people would approach self-sufficiency. In the meantime, he predicted, every new family would "consume at least Six pounds Sterling p an m. in British Manufactures."\textsuperscript{28}

The sustaining feature of this relationship, though, and the main purpose of the new settlement, certainly in John Wentworth's mind, was increased agricultural production for export. Export meant that these goods would have to find their way to Portsmouth, the colony's only port. The cheapest and easiest transportation was always by water. This presented a definite problem in regard to Portsmouth for, although it was situated on a deep tidal river, the Piscataqua, that river extended only a few miles into the hinterland before it dissolved into several insignificant streams. On the other hand the major rivers that served the interior of New Hampshire, such as the Merrimack, the Connecticut, the Saco, all had their mouths outside the province. As a result, any surplus trade that developed in the backcountry was carried beyond New Hampshire's borders for sale and export. The beneficiaries were the merchants in towns such as Newburyport, Boston, and Springfield.
in Massachusetts, or Hartford in Connecticut. These men not only made the profits on any export of these goods, but the New Hampshire traders turned around and exchanged their newly acquired cash with these same dealers for needed manufactured goods. Thus this money was not recirculated in New Hampshire and the province's persistently serious shortage of cash was made even worse. New Hampshire was paying dearly for the various boundary decisions made over the previous 150 years that had left it somewhat of a geographical oddity with only eighteen miles of coast line. Most of the province, as Jeremy Belknap noted, was "by nature cut off from any commercial intercourse with the only port." Because of this, John found it impossible to provide the home government with an accurate report of New Hampshire's imports and exports. He had no way of determining the value of the many goods carried out by land.29

John Wentworth was determined to do something about this peculiar trade problem. He was not encouraging families to put their roots down in New Hampshire so that the fruits of their labor could accrue in neighboring provinces. The only answer, he realized, was to build several major roads connecting Portsmouth and the tidewater region of Great Bay with the most important new areas of settlement in the west and north. John was not the first to conceive of this plan. One of his uncle Benning's main concerns was to see that Portsmouth remained the major entrepôt of the province. To this end he saw the need for a highway linking the Piscataqua with the Connecticut River. In 1763 several proprietors of the Coos region on the upper Connecticut petitioned the Assembly for a road to be cut
from Haverhill to Dover or Durham, both of which had access to Great Bay and the Piscataqua. A year later Jacob Bayley again urged the legislature to subsidize such an enterprise for the sake of efficiency of trade in New Hampshire. The abundance of productive lands in the area created a large market for English manufactures. But these, Bayley complained, the settlers had to get from Boston, "cart them to Northfield, (which is as far from Boston as we are from Portsmouth) and then we have a long Water Carriage." Accordingly, the Assembly voted to have a route marked out between Durham and the new town of Haverhill. 30

For some reason, beyond the rigors and hazards of surveying in a wilderness in the eighteenth century, the task was not completed until four years later in 1768. By that time, however, migration to New Hampshire was moving at a rapid rate, more communities on the upper Connecticut were asking for roads to the older part of the province, and a younger, more energetic Governor had arrived with a belief that good roads were a necessity if New Hampshire were to play a role in helping the British mercantile system succeed. Within less than a year after returning to New Hampshire, John had had time to survey the situation and write to the Earl of Shelburne in England that "some principle Roads thro' the interior part of the province . . . wou'd exceedingly facilitate the population and cultivation of the Lands and be an immense relief and advantage to some thousand poor and faithful peasant Subjects of his Majesty, now struggling against every hardship and Misery of settling a remote, wild, and almost pathless Wilderness." A
short time later he told his cousin Hugh Hall Wentworth that the new roads he was encouraging would obviate the need for inhabitants of New Hampshire to trade any longer at Boston, a practice he was known to be "bitter against." John was confident that vessels out of Portsmouth would soon be carrying goods of much greater value, and he even went so far as to predict that New Hampshire's seaport "cannot fail soon to be the first provision Market in New England." Within a few months of these words, early in 1769, acts were passed in Assembly for two more roads linking the Connecticut River with the seacoast. One would pass from Charlestown, the site of old Fort Number Four, an important garrison in the French and Indian War, to Boscawen on the Merrimack River where it would join the road to Durham coming down from Haverhill. The other was to be built from Stonington, in the fertile intervales of the big bend of the Connecticut north of Haverhill, through the White Mountains and down to Wolfeboro. Because of the Governor's own land in Wolfeboro and his efforts, already begun, to build a sumptuous country estate overlooking the scenic lakes and mountains of that region, he was at that very time putting pressure on proprietors and inhabitants of towns lying between his property and Portsmouth to complete their part of a road between those two points. The proprietors of Stonington could be confident that the Governor would keep that part of the road from Portsmouth to the upper Coos open.

Few in New Hampshire disagreed with their young Governor on the need for new highways in the Province. The roads would be an advantage to the settlers in the west if their distance
to market was cut. The established merchants of Portsmouth would benefit from the increased trade. The prosperity of the entire colony would grow by the retention and recirculation of scarce specie. But with money already in short supply in a poor colony, it was difficult to convince people to part with more of what little cash they had in hand, in hopes of a promised increase in a none-too-certain future. This was where John Wentworth's road program ran into problems. The Assembly was willing to approve acts for building roads. The question was, who would pay for them? Despite the Governor's repeated requests for a grant for this purpose, the Assembly refused to appropriate province tax money to pay for the road construction. Money was too short and debts too great it was argued. John reminded the representatives that the province's economy would never prosper "until Roads are made Thro' the Province by which the Produce of the interior Districts can be consum'd or exported by this Government, and their Imports provided in the same Circuit." It was up to the legislators to take the first step. As he told them, "thereon depends the very being of our commerce, The support and Encouragement of your People, and every reasonable prospect of acquiring any Currency."\(^3\)

The House agreed that there was a great need for roads, but answered that the cost should not be borne by the entire province. Instead, payment should be by those through whose land the roads would pass because they would receive all the direct benefits. It was the job of the selectmen of each town through which a road was to pass, to see that all land within the town was taxed equally to pay for the town's share of the
road. If a road traversed any ungranted lands, the cost incurred was to be paid by the proprietors of nearby towns who would be reimbursed by levies on future grantees of the land. The inadequacy of this method of financing a road building program must have been readily apparent to Wentworth. If one body of men chosen by the people as their representatives could not be persuaded that a provincewide tax was necessary for the project, how could one expect numerous proprietors and inhabitants in dozens of different towns, many themselves struggling for subsistence, to have the foresight to willingly lay out part of their paltry, hard earned cash for the future benefits of a road? Resistance, delays, out and out opposition, were inevitable. But although the Assembly was recalcitrant, John did not give up his hope for the provincial unity and prosperity that would result from roads. He had an idea about another possible source of funds that could be put to this purpose.

When he wrote to Secretary of State Shelburne in 1768 to recommend the construction of roads in his province, Wentworth suggested that this might not only be a prudent use for quitrents, but that the application of these unpopular fees to such a good cause would "secure a ready and cheerful payment." The quitrent, a small yearly fee owed by all who held land from the Crown in recognition of Royal sovereignty, was a remnant from England's medieval past. In America in the eighteenth century it was resented and, if possible, avoided. As with so many of his other instructions that promised to be troublesome, Benning Wentworth exerted little effort to enforce this one and,
as a result, the collection of quitrents during his term as governor had been haphazard at best. This created a problem for his nephew who took all of his instructions seriously. John not only wanted to put payment of quitrents back on a systematic basis, but he had hopes of collecting those that were in arrears. The way to accomplish this, he felt, was to convince the people that their money was being put to good use in a way that would benefit them.

In July, 1768, the Earl of Hillsborough, who in January had been placed at the head of the newly created American Department, wrote to Wentworth that the plan to use quitrent receipts for building roads seemed to have merit and that he was going to lay it before the Board of Trade for further consideration. In August, the Board recommended to the King in Council that Governor Wentworth's proposal be approved. This was what John wanted to hear. He could now proceed with his plan to build the roads that would eventually turn New Hampshire into an integrated economic community. Within three years considerable progress had been made toward that goal. He reported to Hillsborough that not only had people willingly complied in the payment of quitrents, but that £500 in back-quitrents had been collected and used to open more than 200 miles of roads between the Connecticut River and the seacoast. There was still much to be done, but a sound beginning had been made. The Assembly had not been willing to grant any money, but that had not stopped John. His resourcefulness found other funds for the project. And he did not abandon the hope that the legislature might yet see its way to providing a tax-
supported grant for roads. As suspected, there was opposition by individuals in towns, but the Assembly continued to show its support for the goals of the program by passing acts for new roads, paying for surveys, and threatening those that refused to contribute their share that their property would be confiscated and sold for taxes. Thus, despite some inevitable difficulty, John's design for tying the newer parts of New Hampshire to the old through a system of major roads got off to a promising start during the first years of his administration.

To John Wentworth, immigration and transportation were the key elements in making New Hampshire prosperous and bringing it into line with the ideas of Britain's mercantile theorists. But such an extensive development of the interior as he envisioned produced other problems. Principal among these, and something that he early recognized, was the need to extend provincial government, especially the judicial system, to outlying areas. Since the founding of the colony all courts had been held in Portsmouth. For many years this was no problem because the province was small and most of the population lay within twenty miles of the capital. In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, there began to arise complaints about the necessity of traveling to Portsmouth for all judicial business, no matter how small. During Benning Wentworth's term as Governor, the Assembly attempted to divide New Hampshire into two counties for the purpose of creating courts in other towns. The Governor and Council were not opposed to a division of the province into counties, but absolutely refused to
consider the calling of any courts outside of Portsmouth. Their excuses were that the King had earlier disallowed such an attempt, and that in cases of lumbering violations local juries in the interior would never vote for conviction. What Benning and his Council were most worried about, however, was a dilution of the power they wielded in New Hampshire through a total centralization of authority in Portsmouth. Benning Wentworth would never compromise on this issue, but the Assembly, as late as July, 1766, was still looking for a way to divide the province into counties.

By 1767 the new growth in New Hampshire was becoming apparent and, with settlement along the Connecticut River more than 100 miles from Portsmouth growing rapidly, it was becoming more and more difficult to deny the need for a county system and an expanded court structure. At least some of the newcomers from other provinces feared that "a swarm of pettifoggers" from Portsmouth would be unleashed on them by such a plan, but more no doubt sympathized with the farmer from Charlestown who complained that he missed nine days at the height of the planting season when he was ordered to transport a prisoner to the jail in Portsmouth. Such occurrences would be prevented by an adequate county court system in the west. The Assembly was well aware of this and now, with a new governor who might be more receptive, the question was brought up again. On August 21, 1767, a committee appointed by the House recommended the division of New Hampshire into four counties. Five days later the Council replied that any more than two counties at this time would be "inexpedient." The Merrimack River, they added,
would be a proper dividing line. The House, showing its willingness to compromise, stated that it would be satisfied with three counties provided that both the Superior and Inferior Courts were held where they would "best Accomodate the Inhabitants." In September the two bodies agreed on three counties and the general lines that should divide them. The House then proposed when and where each court should meet in each county. The Council replied that it could not agree to this. The right of setting the times and places for courts, they claimed, lay with the prerogative of the Crown. Because of that, Governor Wentworth must be consulted. This was where the matter stood when the Assembly adjourned early in October. 38

It now looked as though New Hampshire was going to get the division into counties and expansion of the court system that it had long needed. But in February, 1768, when the legislators returned, they immediately made it clear that they were not going to ignore what they considered a challenge by the Council. The Assembly agreed that the power to "Erect, Constitute and Establish" courts was given to the Governor in his commission. They argued, however, that this was leftover from the time of the first settlement in New Hampshire when the original courts were created. Since then the courts had always met in Portsmouth and there had been no need for the Governor to use this power which, in any case, applied only in the original instance. Now there were many people living in the areas where the new courts were to be established and, as a matter of right, they were entitled to participate in the
choice of times and places for the meeting of the courts. The House denied any intention of encroaching on the prerogative of the Crown and hoped that the Council was equally as opposed to "a Design or Desire to extend the Prerogative beyond the Legal Limitations . . . to Diminish the Just liberties and Privileges of the People, or to introduce any approaches toward the appearance of . . . superseding the Laws of the Province."

Neither the Assembly nor the Council would yield this point; the situation was a standoff. Early in March, in a gesture designed to indicate that they had already compromised more than could reasonably be expected and that they would not be bullied by the Council, the members of the Assembly voted to return to their original demand for four counties. The Council registered a unanimous veto. 39

Although there is no indication that Governor Wentworth expressed his views on the point in dispute at this time, the House no doubt assumed that he stood with the Council, as Governors had in the past, especially as the question revolved around the prerogative of the Crown. The representatives must thus have been surprised when, on March 24, in dissolving the Assembly, John praised the representatives for their "repeated and mature consultations" that had thrown such important light on the "advantageous measure" of creating counties, that the question could not but soon result in a "more Extensive and more effectual conclusion . . . than has hitherto appeared Probable to the most sanguine." It was nearly two more months, however, before he made his official position known. Shortly after the new Assembly convened in May, John sent down a
message along with a portion of a letter he had written in March to Secretary Shelburne. In that letter he had recommended that New Hampshire be divided not into three, nor even four, but "at least five Counties." With more foresight than the Council, John was looking fifty years ahead by which time he was certain the entire province would be populated. A division into five counties at this time would take care of many of the administrative and judicial problems of the future. He went on to describe to Shelburne the great inconvenience and expense caused to the inhabitants of New Hampshire by the current court system. He also emphasized the need for extension of the law into the far reaches of the province to prevent people from degenerating into a "wild, loose, ungovernable state."

Here then was a man after the Assembly's own heart, a young new Governor who did, indeed, seem to have an interest in all of the people of the province, not just those within a fifteen-mile radius of Portsmouth. It was highly unlikely Benning Wentworth would ever have made such a proposal. Times had changed. Different conditions now required imaginative, new policies. The Council, still predominantly made up of Wentworth relations, clung to the long ingrained rule of the old Governor, that all the affairs of the province must be controlled from Portsmouth. These men were reluctantly jolted into the present by Benning's nephew and successor. With the growth of population in the newer parts of the province, John Wentworth realized that the complete centralization of government instituted by his uncle was no longer workable. In fact the maintenance of some control and order throughout New
Hampshire was now dependent on establishing counties with their own judicial systems. But John did not propose this program from the negative viewpoint of one who realized that he had no other choice. He conceived it, rather, as a positive part of his plan to develop the interior and transform New Hampshire into a productive, unified whole. If people in the west continued to suffer the inconveniences of a lack of government and law, their complaints would undoubtedly discourage others from coming to the province. New Hampshire's wilderness landscape could never be turned into a cultivated pastoral scene without the sweat of many settlers. And lacking extensive cultivation, John's vision of his province as a prosperous, agricultural exporting unit of the British Empire would never become reality. As he told Shelburne, the growth of New Hampshire would be "incredibly accelerated by a permission to form these Counties." In addition, John must have realized that besides advancing his own long range plan for the province, the county proposal would be a wise political move. It was bound to gain support for him in the Assembly; they had been willing to settle for three counties and he proposed five. At the same time, the appointment of judges in the counties would be a welcome addition to the patronage that was his to dispense, the general lack of which John decried as a definite detriment to his success as Governor. These judges would also be important in helping him maintain control throughout the province. From every perspective the plan appeared advantageous.  

The reply from the representatives, then, must have somewhat surprised and disturbed Wentworth. Although their
message opened by praising the proposal and the Governor's "perfect benevolence of mind towards the Inhabitants" of New Hampshire, the remainder of the text was devoted to disputing the last sentence of Wentworth's letter to Shelburne. In that sentence, John had asked the Secretary the proper way to proceed on the division of New Hampshire into counties, "Whether by an Act of the General Assembly, or by the Governor and Council." The question was asked in sincerity and innocence, but with it he had struck a sensitive nerve in the Assembly. Had he realized the reaction it would bring, he probably would have deleted the sentence from the copy of the letter he sent down to the House. The reply to Wentworth was adamant that the creation of new counties and thus courts could be done in no other way than by acts of Assembly, "which Acts can in no wise consistent with the Constitution of his Majesty's Government here, be repealed, annulled, or altered by the Governor and Council." As it had with the Council in February, the Assembly was now in May with the Governor indicating that it was extremely jealous of what it considered to be its constitutional rights. Even though the Governor's five-county plan was highly favorable to their interests, the representatives would never accept it if created by executive order. The precedent would be too dangerous—the encroachment of royal prerogative too great.

In the late spring of 1768 John Wentworth was getting his baptism in practical politics. He had been close to political maneuvering and power struggles before, especially in England, but only as an observer. Now he was a central
participant. His enlightened ideas, his popularity, his "benevolent" programs, all counted for nothing when power was at stake, for in colonial politics, possibly even more so than in English politics in the eighteenth century, the maintenance of power while attempting to advance on that of others was the cardinal rule. No prerogative or principle was ever surrendered easily. John became even more aware of this when, a few days later, in early June, the Assembly declined to vote the annual supply for the maintenance of government on the basis that the people, suffering under the hardship of not having counties, could not afford it. What the Assembly seemed to be saying was that the Governor, instead of originally referring the matter to England for deliberation that might take some time, should have proposed it first to the legislature of the province so that a suitable bill could be drawn up. The act would have to be suspended for royal approval in any case. In the eyes of many, then, the Governor's action to have the idea previewed in England first was an extra step that only added to the length of time that would have to pass before the needed counties finally became a reality.

John probably followed this course out of caution. He was a new governor, he was young, and he had recently been at Whitehall where he had seen the scrutiny to which colonial governors were subjected. He knew what dissatisfaction with his performance could mean—his own uncle was his best reminder. But he also had a strong desire to please his English superiors because his patron, the Marquis of Rockingham, had recommended him to the post. He did not want to let the Marquis down.
Any extensive plan such as dividing his province into counties and expanding the court system he would naturally feel obligated to first clear with England. That the Assembly might object to this probably never crossed his mind.

After several days consideration John replied with a long, self-justifying message to the House. Even if what they complained of as a "grievance" was indeed that, he wrote, no good could be gained by laying another on top if it, which was what the representatives had done. But his actions, he assured, far from being a grievance, were in the best interests of the province. It was much better to have the proposal for division into counties preliminarily screened, than to go to the trouble of drawing up an act and submitting it to England only to have it disallowed. In such a case, which was all too likely according to John, an extra year would be required to pass another act, resubmit it to England, and have it approved. His method, which he predicted would take "probably but a few months," would help the people of New Hampshire achieve their goal of a convenient court system much more quickly. Taking personal offense at what he considered the impertinence of the House, John stated that he could not comprehend the reasons for "applying the epithets of grievance, Burthens, Hardships and oppression in answer to the Speech from the Chair which recommended attention to the most interesting and Honorable concerns of the Province, and I am fully satisfied that neither my words or conduct can have any such intention, appearance, or tendency." This confrontation with the Assembly had been unexpected and unsettling for Wentworth. Nevertheless, nothing
more could be done until word arrived from England, and in early July he adjourned the legislators.\textsuperscript{43}

On August 3, the Board of Trade recommended that Governor Wentworth be allowed to "give his Assent to an Act of the General Assembly for dividing the said Province into five counties." On the thirteenth, Lord Hillsborough wrote to John notifying him of the decision. When the Assembly reconvened in October, however, the Governor had not yet received Hillsborough's letter. Nevertheless, he sent down a note urging an immediate grant of supply for the province and, probably as an inducement, a portion of a letter from Hillsborough written in July that was vaguely optimistic about the chances of approval for the county proposal. This may have had some effect for two days later the house voted £2,200 to supply the province treasury for the current year. Unfortunately, the act never went into effect because the Council and the Assembly could not agree on the details of the excise to fund it. When John Wentworth prorogued the Assembly at the end of October, there still had been no provision made to meet public expenses.\textsuperscript{44}

It was not surprising, then, that when the Assembly met again in February, 1769, John's first consideration in addressing the members was for "the allowances Due for the respective services of Government," which money he complained was "now two years in arrear." When that had been done, he continued, he would be ready to join with the Council and the Assembly to form a proper bill which would divide New Hampshire into five counties. The implication was clear—that his
cooperation was needed to pass such a bill and that he would not join with them until the supply was voted. John was playing the Assembly's game; he was as unwilling to sacrifice any of his power as they were theirs. Even though the county bill was an eventual certainty, he did not want them to think that their tactic of withholding money until it was done could be used as a precedent. As a matter of principle, the supply must come first. For this reason he made no mention of Hillsborough's letter, which he had received the previous November, in which the Colonial Secretary sent the King's "Royal Permission to assent to an Act of the General Assembly" for dividing New Hampshire into five counties. If the Assembly saw this he would have no grounds for not approving such an act, even if the supply had not been granted. If they knew he had received instructions from England specifically calling for an act of Assembly to create counties in New Hampshire, he would lose any leverage he might have had.

The Assembly, however, realized what the Governor was doing and was not to be deterred. No mention was made of a bill for supply, but within several days a committee was appointed to meet with a body to be similarly chosen by the Council to draw up a plan by which New Hampshire would be divided into counties. The members of the Assembly suspected, from Wentworth's offer to join with them in this plan after they had passed a supply bill, that he must have received assent from England to do so. One week later, on March 7, they called the Governor's bluff by asking him exactly what instructions he had received from Whitehall regarding this
matter. He could no longer keep the information from them. It is not difficult to imagine his chagrin as he tersely told William Parker, John Sherburne, and John Goffe, the committee sent up from the House, that "all he had Relative to the subject" was that he had been given permission to consent to an act of Assembly for dividing the province into five counties.

Having found out what they needed to know, the Assembly proceeded to the long awaited business of dividing New Hampshire into counties. Two weeks were spent dueling with the Council over boundaries. The main intent of the House here seemed to be to keep the area, and thus jurisdiction, of the easternmost county, the one that would include Portsmouth, as small as possible. The Council, still reluctant to give up centralized control over the province, was working for just the opposite. The councillors wanted included in the eastern county most of the larger towns in the province which, naturally, were also in the east. A compromise was finally worked out whereby Dover and Rochester were left out of the county that included Portsmouth. On March 23, agreement was reached on the boundaries of the five counties. In accordance with the Governor's original plan, three were to become immediately active while the other two, those to the north, would gain full county privileges when their populations warranted it. The long sought division of New Hampshire into counties was at last completed.45

The differences between the Council and the Assembly, however, were not yet settled. The important question of where the courts were to meet was still to be resolved. The Council soon found that not only had Portsmouth lost its importance
as the center of justice in the province, but that the Assembly expected the capital to share those responsibilities within its own county. The House proposed two Courts of Common Pleas, two Courts of General Sessions, and one Superior Court yearly both for Portsmouth and Exeter. Half of the county courts needed to be held out of Portsmouth, they argued, because in most instances evidence "can be only by the oaths of witnesses and they are generally to be found residing where the Cause of Action arises of which not ten in a hundred of disputed actions has hitherto happened at Portsmouth." The Council, not impressed, answered that "no sufficient Reason has yet been given for Removing any of the Courts out of the Town of Portsmouth . . . the long Established Resort of the People for Justice." The Council was prepared, however, to allow Exeter two each of the lower courts as long as both Superior Courts remained in Portsmouth. When the Assembly held fast, the Council offered Exeter one of each of the three courts. This was acceptable. The counties and their courts were finally completed.  

On April 27, following a brief adjournment, an act establishing five counties with their courts passed both bodies of the legislature. It included the required suspending clause and could not go into effect until approval arrived from England. Nevertheless, the hardest part was over. The names given to the counties showed the influence of the Governor. The first, the easternmost and most populous one that had been so much the center of contention, was called Rockingham after John Wentworth's patron and friend. The province too, though, owed
the Marquis a debt for, as John had pointed out even before he became Governor, it was through Rockingham's unswerving effort that the Stamp Act had been repealed. New Hampshire had been too niggardly to commission a statue or even a portrait of the former First Minister. Now they found a cheaper way to immortalize him. The county just to the north, one that was to be inactive but which included Dover, the town that John believed due to its proximity to the interior would eventually be the metropolis of New Hampshire, was given the name of Strafford. This also was a title associated with the Wentworth family. Sir Thomas Wentworth, the first Earl of Strafford, who sacrificed his head in the ill-fated service of Charles I in the seventeenth century, was the most notable of that name. John, however, had closer associations with William Wentworth, a cousin of Rockingham, whom he had come to know in England and who had inherited the Earldom. Naming the middle county Hillsborough was wise politically because of the current Secretary of State for America, Wills Hill, the Earl of Hillsborough, and the fact that there already was a town within its jurisdiction by the same name. Cheshire as the name of the westernmost county seems to have derived from the English county of that name, but the reason is not certain. Grafton, the name given the other inactive county in the northwest, can be traced to the Duke of Grafton, one of the Secretaries of State in Rockingham's Administration, and now himself First Lord of the Treasury.47

With the county division completed, a supply of £3000 for the province was finally granted.48 The Assembly's goals
had been accomplished; there was no longer any need to withhold the money. The representatives had been stubborn; they had made their point. They had aptly demonstrated their power to the new Governor. John had no power to coerce them and he had been forced to accept that fact. Nevertheless, he must have been pleased when the county act was completed. This was an important part of his broad program to invigorate New Hampshire's agrarian economy and make the province a self-sustaining member of the British Empire. The increased convenience for the people, and the renewed sense of justice and order imparted by the county system could not help but be an encouragement for others to come to New Hampshire's wilderness lands. John must also have realized that it did much for his own image and that of royal government generally in the province, for the plan had originated with him. John Wentworth was a different kind of Governor from his uncle. He professed to have a genuine interest in the interior of the province, in areas other than Portsmouth and the seacoast. Now the division of New Hampshire into counties proved that his interest was real.

Two other developments during his first several years as Governor served to separate John in the public mind from the political and mercantile aristocracy long identified with Portsmouth, and to establish him as a man of the interior. Those were the building of his country home in Wolfeboro near Lake Winnipesaukee, and the establishment of the first college in New Hampshire in the wilds along the Connecticut River. John had maintained his interest as one of Wolfeboro's proprietors while he was in England. When he returned he found
that the town still had no settlers and, to speed up the process, the proprietors had divided the land into twenty-four approximately equal lots drawn at random among themselves. John had received lot number seven, 642 acres on the east side of Smith's Pond, a lake nearly four miles long and three miles wide connected by Smith's River to the much larger Lake Winnipesaukee. Within the next few years he had added to this original plot adjacent land from Wolfeboro and nearby Middleton and New Durham creating an estate of more than 5000 acres.

John's idea for a fashionable country home, spawned by his experience at Wentworth-Woodhouse, was now spurred on by his dissatisfaction with the house allotted him in Portsmouth. Wolfeboro was an ideal place. John was an original proprietor, it was fifty miles inland from the capital, and the magnificent view of blue lakes and rugged pine covered mountains made even the lush Yorkshire countryside look pale by comparison.

In the first spring after his return to New Hampshire John sent two men, one of whom was going to be a settler in Wolfeboro, to "clear a few acres and build an humble habitation" for him on his land. This building probably served as a temporary shelter while he surveyed his property and made plans to erect a permanent home. Within a year, in the spring of 1769, the foundation was under construction. In April his friend from Boston, Joseph Harrison with his brother Peter, visited him in Portsmouth. Peter Harrison was Collector of Customs at New Haven but more important, he was the finest architect in the American colonies. Among the buildings to his credit were the Redwood Library in Newport and King's Chapel
in Boston. John said he would like to have Peter's advice on his Wolfeboro house and promised to send him the dimensions. During the summer of 1769 John spent as much time as he could at Wolfeboro and, when a minister was available, even held Sunday services at his home for the new settlers of the region. By Autumn, however, the house was still far from finished. In September he sent the measurements to Joseph Harrison to be forwarded for his brother's perusal. Only two rooms had been completed as far as plaster and those, he offered, "I had rather undo than spoil the House" which "may be divided any way the Architect shall design." John's only requirement for the basic plan was a room forty feet in length.50

This gives an indication of the size of the dwelling for this room was not to run along the front or the back, but rather from front to back through the depth of the house. Upon completion John Wentworth's Wolfeboro home measured one hundred feet by forty and was unquestionably one of the largest mansions in New England. To the right of the main hall, upon entering, lay the forty-foot drawing room. This probably was where John held Sunday church services for his neighbors. A room of this size would be adequate for almost any official function the Governor might need to conduct while away from Portsmouth. The Council could easily meet here and, eventually, even some of the new courts for Strafford County if necessary. Above, on the second floor, was a room of the same dimensions designated as the ballroom. Across the hall, on both floors, were six more rooms which in themselves would have comprised a large house.
As with construction, no efforts were spared in decorating and furnishing. Special wallpaper was ordered for one of the upper rooms which was to be known as the "East India Chamber." Damask paper and curtains were used in other rooms. Marble fireplaces were found throughout the house, and in special niches on either side of the fireplace in John's own large bedroom stood statues of the King and Queen of England. In spite of the great size of the house and the difficulty of transportation, every room had a full complement of furniture including maple, mahogany, and walnut tables, chairs, sofas, sidetables, chests, and bedsteads. Carpets covered the floors. John likewise did not skimp on his library for the new house which contained upwards of 450 volumes including works on architecture, navigation, and drama, along with various magazines, pamphlets, and official papers.

It was obvious that John did not intend Wolfeboro to be a place for only an occasional summer visit. In fact, he told Daniel Rindge that he planned to live there "from May 'till November, except any Provincial Business shou'd call me a few days to Town." Thus he would spend half the year, perhaps more, away from Portsmouth. Despite the magnificent house, his reasons for doing so were not merely for personal enjoyment or for the prestige of living like a landed English nobleman. As much a motivating factor was his desire to turn the wilderness into a garden, to develop his land to its greatest agricultural potential. By doing this he would provide, like the Marquis of Rockingham in Yorkshire, an example for others to follow. It is no coincidence that in 1768, the year John
began to clear his land, the first families finally began to settle in Wolfeboro. Wolfeboro gave him a chance to be personally involved, to be a help in his own large plan to develop New Hampshire as a strong agricultural exporting province of the British Empire. He had a vision that through his leadership, Wolfeboro within ten years would be populated "more usefully than is seen from this town /Portsmouth/ to Florida." Where Wolfeboro went, could the rest of New Hampshire be far behind? John hoped not. This does not mean, however, that his efforts at Wolfeboro were merely the manifestation of an abstract plan, totally utilitarian in conception. His goals both for his own farm and for the province emanated as much from a personal love of nature and agrarian improvement. As he wrote to a friend in the fall of 1769, he was "assiduously attending Mr. Cushman's practical Lectures on Agriculture, cutting down a Tree here, and planting another there, clearing, building, and plowing with equal Avidity."51 Here, then, as settlers could see, was a governor not so unlike themselves, clearing the wilderness as they were (although on a somewhat grander scale), a man not afraid to dirty his hands in the soil. Here was a man they could identify with and place their trust in.

One other event during John's first years as Governor especially served to establish him in the minds of the new inhabitants of the interior as a man who had their best interests at heart. That was the relocation of Eleazar Wheelock's Indian school from Connecticut to New Hampshire's Connecticut River valley. By 1767 Wheelock was anxious to carry out his
proposed move to a site closer to the Indians. He had several locations in mind, one of which was the upper Connecticut River in New Hampshire, not far from several tribes of Canadian Indians and convenient to water transportation to the Iroquois Nations in the west. He had not forgotten John Wentworth's promise, while in England, of a township for the school. Another major inducement for Wheelock's serious consideration of New Hampshire as a site was that it was one of the few places where the possibility existed of obtaining a charter for his school. He had long sought a charter, but now it was especially crucial for the independence it would give him from an English Board of Trustees that administered the funds his representatives had raised in England, and who were beginning to insist on even greater control over the school. He felt the time had come to bring the school to John Wentworth's attention again.  

Late in the year Wheelock traveled to Portsmouth to collect some needed money that had been willed to the school. He also took the opportunity to pay a brief visit to the Governor and personally introduce himself. Apparently he did not then spell out his ideas but a short time later, at the end of December, he wrote to John that their visit had encouraged him to again consider the possibility of moving his school to New Hampshire. In particular, he had in mind the upper Connecticut River where many of his friends and acquaintances from Connecticut had settled and who were eager to have the school there. Desiring to know the Governor's true attitude toward the school without himself appearing over-eager, Wheelock
added, somewhat coyly, "I shall leave it wholly with you to determine whether I suggest anything worthy your notice." 53

John did think it worth his notice. In March, 1768, he wrote back with a renewal of his offer of a town for the school. He would charge no fee for the grant and, other than the normal terms for all new townships, his only requirement was that he be made a permanent trustee. John promised "every personal assistance" in his power and, true to his word, when Wheelock sent Ebenezer Cleaveland to New Hampshire in August to search for a suitable site, the Governor assigned one of his deputy surveyors to accompany and assist Cleaveland. 54

Wentworth was going out of his way to insure the location of the Indian school in his province. Doubtless much of his reason lay in Wheelock's mention of the enthusiasm of the settlers in the upper Connecticut valley for the school. These people, many of whom had emigrated from the Lebanon area of Connecticut, were aware that Eleazar Wheelock's new school would not be exclusively for Indians. Discouraged with the high rate of failure among his Indian missionaries, Wheelock had become intent on educating white youths to serve the natives, possibly with certain selected Indian students. The people in New Hampshire's new Connecticut River towns, however, saw other possibilities for Wheelock's white trainees. Ministers and teachers were badly needed in the towns. The school, they reasoned, might provide them without interfering with its missionizing activities. John knew of Wheelock's intent and the settlers' hopes and saw the school as an important inducement
in getting more people into this relatively unpopulated region, one of his primary goals for the province. But a school for natives only would have been enough reason for John Wentworth's enthusiastic response. The prospect of bringing the Indians adjacent to New Hampshire's borders under the civilizing influences of education, Christianity, and the King's government, would be a strong encouragement to potential settlers contemplating a move to the rich intervale lands of the upper Connecticut but reluctant due to vivid memories of the savage frontier raids of the last war. Wentworth realized that Eleazar Wheelock's school would do much to erase those memories, improve relations between the red man and the white, and productively populate the province.

In fact, there were few in New Hampshire who did not see advantages in the school. Members of the Portsmouth gentry contributed generous quantities of land to the school in the belief that its existence would increase the value of their other landholdings. Similar reasoning prompted most of the river towns and even others to the east, such as Plymouth and Campton, to compete strongly for the school. Thus, landing Eleazar Wheelock and his school would not only be an important boost for John's long-range plan for New Hampshire, but such a success, as he must have realized, could not help but increase his own popularity.

Ebenezer Cleaveland, on returning from his exploratory expedition, which included sections of Massachusetts and New York as well as New Hampshire, reported to Eleazar Wheelock that he could "without partiality say that all the purposes of
the design may be as well answered in western parts of the Province of New Hampshire as any other places." In particular he recommended Haverhill and Orford for their fertile soil and large amount of cultivated land. Wheelock wrote to Governor Wentworth that he was leaving the choice of the site to the English Trust, but that he would make clear his preference for the Coos region of New Hampshire and especially the towns of Haverhill and Orford. This he did in his report to England of December 23, 1768.58 With the selection of the site relatively certain, Wheelock turned his attention to his next difficult task—approaching the Governor about a charter.

This was a delicate situation. If Wentworth was informed of the English trustees' likely opposition to incorporation for the school, he would not grant the charter. If he was not informed but questioned his own right to grant such a charter, he might write to England for a legal opinion and discover that Wheelock had not told him the whole truth about the trustees' position. Either way Wheelock knew his hopes for a charter would be dashed. His most prudent move, he finally decided, would be to have two friends in Portsmouth, Congregational ministers Samuel Langdon and Samuel Haven, first sound out the Governor on the idea.

Wheelock shortly was relieved to find out that John Wentworth harbored no qualms about granting the school a charter, and he swiftly set to work to draw up the document. With the draft completed in late August, 1769, he sent it off to Portsmouth with his son, Ralph, and Nathaniel Whitaker for the Governor's approval. The report they brought on their return
came as something of a shock. Wentworth had not objected, in fact probably was highly pleased, with Wheelock's suggestion to him that the school might be chartered as a "college" instead of an "academy" as written in the draft. Neither was he bothered by Wheelock's major innovation in the charter, the creation of a second trust. A new American trust would control the school while the English body was left with virtually no power. What the Governor was concerned with was the composition of these trusts. To the American board, which was headed by himself and Wheelock and completed with Wheelock's close family and Congregationalist friends from Connecticut, Wentworth wanted the addition of at least three provincial officers from New Hampshire. Most disturbing to the head of the school, though, was his understanding that the Governor insisted on the addition of the Bishop of London to both Trusts, as the most powerful member in England, and ex-officio in America. 59

This suggests another possible reason for John's desire to have the school in New Hampshire, especially as it was now to be a college with degree-granting rights. He was an Anglican and throughout his term in office promoted the expansion of the English Church in his predominantly Congregational province. Did his main interest in the college derive from a desire to turn it into an Anglican institution, one that by supplying ministers to new towns would play a key role in his religious designs for New Hampshire? Evidence can be found that would support that conclusion. In a letter to the Bishop of London little more than a year later, John praised the college as so "perfectly liberal" that it would "unavoidably
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spread and promote" the establishment of the Church of England
in America.

He went on to claim it would he "so great an

acquisition to the Church," that it was drawing fire from many
Congregationalists in Hew England.

Several years later an

Anglican missionary in New Hampshire, Ranna Cossit, asserted
in a letter to England that "Governor W/entwor/th is fully
perswaded in time he shall bring /the college/ about . . .

to

be of the Establishment."^
These letters do indicate that John made a connection
between Eleazar Wheelock's school and the Church of England.
They do not, however, constitute sufficient evidence to suggest
that he wanted the school in New Hampshire primarily in hopes
of advancing Anglicanism.

The letter to the Bishop of London

can not be taken at face value due to the circumstances under
which it was written.

John was faced with the task of convincing

an Anglican Bishop to sit on the board of a school in America
that was run by Congregationalists.

He naturally had to play

down the dissenting aspects of the college and at the same time
emphasize what it could do for the Church of England.

Had

anyone in New Hampshire read the letter they would have realized
how far the Governor was stretching the truth, as evidenced by
his inference that Congregationalists were against the school
on the grounds that it would be a boon to Anglicanism.

This

was pure propaganda designed solely for the eyes of the Bishop
of London.

The statement by the missionary, Ranna Cossit,

doubtless did contain some truth, but it was made more than
three years after the college was actually chartered in New


Hampshire, and it should not be assigned more importance than it deserves.

John Wentworth's thinking, he claimed, in assigning the Bishop to serve as a trustee was guided only by his wish to avoid Anglican objections to the college and thus to insure continued support for it in England. As he told Wheelock, "As many insinuations have been and are yet frequently transmitting to England to depreciate the reputation of the intended College, insinuating that the benevolent Charities will be applied merely and exclusively to the advancement of sectaries and particular opinions, with a fixed view to discourage the Established Church of England, it is not only important, but essential that such ideas should be exterminated." His proposal would aid the school and in no way compromise its religious position. John went on to explain that there had been a misunderstanding of his intentions. He wanted the Bishop of London on just the English Trust, and then as a member with no more influence than any other. Further, for the "security" of the college he was only recommending, not insisting on, the addition of three provincial officers to the American Trust.

Wheelock's alarm at the prospect of an Anglican Bishop connected with his school is entirely understandable. There had been a fear for some time by Dissenters in all the colonies that the Church of England was making plans to subvert their faith by sending Bishops to America. Adding to this apprehension was the likelihood that such a project would be financed by colonial taxation. This can be traced as an underlying factor in the deteriorating relations between Great Britain
and her colonies that had erupted into open violence at the
time of the Stamp Act. Wheelock himself made the sensitivity
of this issue clear to the Governor when, in responding, he
spoke of the "formidable idea our country in general have of
a Bishop, and how jealous people are of their religious rights
and privileges, and of everything that has the least look of
an infringement upon them." Wheelock was so upset, in fact,
that he was determined to move his school to another location.
Thus John Wentworth's success in persuading him to accept the
terms and come to New Hampshire after all, was a major achieve­
ment. John's ability to convince a shrewd, doubting Dissenter
such as Wheelock seems good evidence for the sincerity of his
explanation.61

But there is even more reason to believe that John
Wentworth's interest in the school was not mainly religious.
He knew that the college was Congregational and would be sending
Dissenting ministers out to New Hampshire's towns. If his
greatest concern was with the spread of Anglicanism, he would
never have allowed the school to move into his province from
Connecticut. John remained strongly committed to Anglicanism
in New Hampshire, and he undoubtedly did hope that the college
could eventually be turned to that persuasion. This was only
natural and over the years, whenever opportunities arose, he
sought in small ways to promote that end.62 Yet he never did
anything to antagonize Wheelock and the others who ran the
college, or to cause them to have misgivings about having
moved to New Hampshire. On the contrary, throughout his entire
term as Governor he uttered nothing but praise for the school,
and time and time again went out of his way to secure support for it. His strong commitment to the college was evidenced by personal visits and by the interest he took in the students and in specific programs and problems. The non-partisan enthusiasm John expressed for the school over the years is the best proof that his Anglican faith was not a major factor in his original efforts to lure Dr. Wheelock to New Hampshire. Rather he was motivated by his desire to populate and develop the province frontier, and by his belief that a school in the interior would greatly facilitate that goal. Fittingly, one of the major roads he proposed for the province was to lead from his new home at Wolfeboro to the college on the Connecticut River.

With his fears assuaged and the decision to move to New Hampshire made, Eleazar Wheelock returned to more practical matters. One of the first considerations was the name to be given the college. At the end of his letter of October 25, 1769, in which he agreed to the Governor's terms, Wheelock offered to christen the college for Wentworth. This was a politic move but not one he was sincere about, for on the same day he wrote to his emissary in Portsmouth, Alexander Phelps, that more advantages could be gained by naming it after the Earl of Dartmouth, head of the English Trust. The implication was clear. Phelps was to agree to name the college for the Governor only if that seemed necessary. Fortunately for Wheelock it was not. John declined the honor in the best interests of the school for he was as aware as Wheelock that they needed all the help they could get on the other side of
the Atlantic. Anger on the part of the Trust in England was fully expected. They had not wanted any charter. Now they were going to be confronted with one that not only went beyond the original intent of the school to educate Indians, but one which transferred most of their assumed powers to a trust in America. The name of Dartmouth College in the charter might help soften the blow and, after the initial shock wore off, insure the continuation of the English benevolence that was so important for the success of the school.

In August Wheelock had received the English Trust's approval of New Hampshire's upper Connecticut valley as the new site for his school. The choice between Haverhill and Orford would be left to him. In December the Governor signed the charter bringing the college officially into existence. The following month, according to his promise, he granted the unsettled town of Landaff as an endowment. He also viewed it as the best potential site for the school. Because Landaff had no proprietors or settlers, he explained, the college could control the government of the town as was done "usefully in England" at Oxford and Cambridge. John listed Bath and Haverhill as two alternatives, however, because of their proximity to the river. Hanover seems to have been mentioned as a possibility as early as January, 1770, and by February and March other towns were renewing their offers of land and raising substantial subscriptions of money as inducements for the college.67

The choice of a location, which had appeared relatively settled only a short time before, was now an open question again. Eleazar Wheelock thus decided the only solution was to view the
various sites and make the selection himself. He set out for New Hampshire's Coos region in April and, following several side trips, arrived there early in June. He found the towns quarrelling among themselves and asked the Governor to join him to help resolve the problem, but John could not get away from Portsmouth. Bearing the burden himself, Wheelock and his party traveled up and down the river for sixty miles. He then moved east to look again at Plymouth, Campton, and Rumney, which, though not on the Connecticut, he found "very inviting." On June 26, with Moses Little and Colonel Jacob Bayley, he headed for Portsmouth to meet with Wentworth and the other New Hampshire trustees. On July 5, 1770, after a week's discussion, the President of the school, the Governor, and the other trustees present, chose Hanover as the site for Dartmouth College.68

It is no wonder that this came as a surprise to many, for Hanover had scarcely been mentioned before and had not seemed to be in serious contention. Haverhill had appeared the most likely site. Wheelock called Hanover "most central on the river" and said that it was near the only convenient place for a bridge. Other than this it is difficult to tell why it was chosen over Haverhill. A number of people, especially from other competing towns, understandably were upset. Some accused Wheelock of owning land in the town and choosing it for his own personal gain. Even George Whitefield, the famed evangelist who supported the school in England, said that from that side of the water Wheelock gave the appearance of using the Trust money to his own advantage. There was no evidence
for these charges, however, and Governor Wentworth, who had originally hoped for another town, stood resolutely behind the choice. As he wrote to Wheelock, "it was our Duty to judge and determine, without any other view than to promote the College as benevolently instituted." To John, the exact site was not that important anyway. What was significant was that at last the college was securely located in New Hampshire. In the long run it could not help but be a highly valuable asset in his larger plans to populate the province, tap the agricultural potential of this area, and thus make New Hampshire itself a valuable asset to Britain's system of empire. In addition, notwithstanding the partisan carping that accompanied the choice of Hanover, John's success in locating Dartmouth College in New Hampshire could do nothing but heighten his popular image as an actively concerned, resourceful governor who kept the best interests of his province and its people foremost in his mind.

John had, indeed, proven to be a significant change from his uncle. His entrenchment among the seacoast commercial aristocracy did not seem to be nearly as obvious as that of Benning, and he actually appeared to have more interest in the interior of the province than in Portsmouth. Part of this was due to his natural inclination, but more was a result of the three years he had spent in England and the role he had played in the Stamp Act controversy. There John was directly confronted with the problems facing the British Empire and was asked his opinion on how they could best be solved. His own thinking on what should constitute a properly functioning colonial
system, and the consequent resolution of the immediate crisis by the Rockingham Administration, had led him, on being appointed Governor, to resolve on a plan to make the province of New Hampshire a strongly contributing, loyal member of the Empire, an Empire that would work to the benefit of all of its various parts.

During John Wentworth's first three years in office a good beginning was made in that part of his plan designed to improve New Hampshire's internal economic situation thereby making the province a stronger member of the British mercantile system. As a result of the end of the French and Indian War, a steady flow of settlers from outside the province into New Hampshire's undeveloped lands had already begun. Seeing these people as the key to increasing agricultural production, first to subsistence level, then on to the all-important point of surplus needed for export, John guaranteed the continuance of this migration by encouragements to landholding, the creation of a convenient judicial system, and the founding of a college in the new area of settlement that would help fill the newcomers' religious and educational needs. To insure that New Hampshire and not its neighbors profited from this promised agrarian bonanza, he promoted the construction of several major roads to link the developing Connecticut River valley with Portsmouth, the only port in the province.

John's efforts were generally successful. He did, however, encounter some problems, in fact probably more than he originally expected. New Hampshire's relative poverty and the Assembly's understandable reluctance to grant money had
hit him personally in the form of what he considered substandard living accommodations and an inadequate salary. More important for his long-range goals for New Hampshire, though, was the Assembly's refusal to tax the province for the roads that even they agreed needed to be built. And John also discovered that, regardless of how much he or his programs were liked, a certain inevitable barrier existed between himself and the provincial legislature simply from the fact that he was the representative of royal authority. The change in British policy at the end of the French and Indian War and the resulting Stamp Act controversy had created in all of the colonies a heightened awareness of constitutional questions in general, and a renewed sensitivity to boundaries of power in particular. New Hampshire was no exception, as John found out when the Assembly refused to grant the annual supply until an act for the creation of counties had been approved to send to England.

But though Wentworth may have been disappointed, he did not press the Assembly on any of these points. He built his own palatial estate in the country, and he was confident that an adequate permanent salary would soon be forthcoming from England. Funds for the roadbuilding program were found in previously untapped quitrent receipts. John sparred briefly with the Assembly over the supply question, but he found he had no power to coerce that body. He did not want to give up any power to the Assembly, but even less did he want to antagonize its members because this would interfere with his other major objective for the province. Not only was he intent on making New Hampshire a strong member of the British Empire, but he
felt he must at the same time minimize political friction between New Hampshire and England; he must keep his province loyal. For John Wentworth, these two goals were not unrelated. As he wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough concerning the division of New Hampshire into counties, such an act would not only be beneficial to the internal development of the province, it would also "augment a spirit of reverence and obedience to Government, toward which great end every measure shou'd urge."
NOTES

CHAPTER VI

Wentworth to Messrs. Mayne and Co. at Lisbon, Jan. 16, 1768, Transcripts of John Wentworth Letter Book no. 1, New Hampshire Archives, 69-70; Wentworth to the Commissioners of the Navy, Treasury, Admiralty, Board of Trade and Plantations, and the Earl of Shelburne, Sept. 3, 1767, Ibid., 53-57; Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, June 16, 1767, Ibid., 1; Wentworth to Richard Willis, Aug. 18, 1767, Ibid., 29; Wentworth to Joseph Harrison, Feb. 13, 1768, Ibid., 77-78.

Wentworth to Edward Bridgen, July 20, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 17; Wentworth to William Byrd, June 23, 1767, Ibid., 2-3; Wentworth to Peter Randolph, July 10, 1767, Ibid., 11; Wentworth to John Clapham, July 15, 1767, Ibid., 15-16; William Tryon to Wentworth, Dec. 23, 1771, NHSP, 10:221.

Wentworth to Thomas Smith, July 17, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 16; Wentworth to William Bayard, July 3, 1767, Ibid., 6-7; Joseph Harrison to The Marquis of Rockingham, July 29, 1767, Wentworth-Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield Central Library, R63-8; Derek H. Watson, "Barlow Trecothick and other Associates of Lord Rockingham during the Stamp Act Crisis 1765-66" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Sheffield University, 1958), 100-128.


The Reverend Arthur Browne to the SPG, Nov. 6, 1767, SPG Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, 98.


Wentworth to Hugh Hall Wentworth, Aug. 5, 1766, Wentworth Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, fol. 4.


19 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, July 23, 1771, WWM, Rl-1383; Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, April 20, 1774, PRO, C.O. 5/938; Wentworth to Hector Cramahe, April 5, 1768, Letter Book no. 1, 92; NHSP, 7:232, 257; Wentworth to Thomas Smith, July 17, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 16; David McClure, Diary of David McClure, ed. by Franklin B. Dexter (New York, 1899), 149. On various services rendered for fees by governors see Greene, *Provincial Governor*, 61-62.

20 Wentworth to Anthony Belham, Aug. 9, 1768, Letter Book no. 1, 131. Wentworth seems to have borrowed a considerable amount of money from his father. See Lawrence Shaw Mayo, *John Wentworth: Governor of New Hampshire, 1767-1775* (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), 99.


23 Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, Mar. 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6.
Derek H. Watson, "John Wentworth's Description of the American Colonies in 1765," Historical New Hampshire, 27 (Fall, 1972): 153; Robert G. Albion, Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862 (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), 269-78. Wentworth's designs for New Hampshire in 1768 were very much in line with what he had told Rockingham in 1765. At that time he stated that the "true interest of both the colonies and Great Britain/ is to promote population and to direct and encourage them to the most proper employments." (Watson, 148-49) "Proper employments" meant agriculture; it would be the job of the governors to carry this plan out.

Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, Mar. 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6.

Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, Vol. 3: The British Isles and the American Colonies: The Northern Plantations, 1748-1754 (Caldwell, Id., 1936), 298; Wentworth to Edward Bridgen, July 20, Sept. 11, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 17, 39-40; John Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, Mar. 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6; A. S. Batchellor et al., The Laws of New Hampshire, 1689-1835 (Manchester, Concord and Bristol, N.H., 1904-22), 3:466; Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, June 3, 1773, PRO, C.O. 5/938. See also Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, May 25, 1768, PRO, C.O. 5/935; to Hillsborough, Feb. 18, and Nov. 4, 1770, PRO, C.O. 5/930; to the Earl of Dartmouth, Dec. 19, 1772, and Aug. 5, 1774, PRO, C.O. 5/930. In his letter to Shelburne, John noted that "The people are by no means inclined to any sort of Manufacture—scarcely a Shoemaker, a Joyner or Silversmith but quits his Trade as soon as he can get able to buy a little Trust of Land, and build a Cottage in the Wilderness—which disposition I am industrious to cultivate and encourage as the most effectual means to prevent any Schemes of Manufacture taking place."

Because of the Masonian Proprietership, Wentworth was limited to making grants beyond the curved line that encompassed all land within sixty miles of Portsmouth. This undoubtedly was why his interest in new settlement focused on the Connecticut River.

Belknap, *New Hampshire*, 2:61-62, 153-54. Belknap's description is of some years later when John Wentworth was no longer Governor. Nevertheless, the problem was still the same.


*NHSP*, 18:584, and 7:151, 195; Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, Mar. 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6; Aaron Stores to Eleazar Wheelock, Aug. 10, 1771, Wheelock Papers, DDA, 771460; Wentworth to Hugh Hall Wentworth, Dec. 23, 1768, Letter Book no. 1, 188-89; Records of the Assembly, Mar. 11, 16, 1769, PRO, C.O.5/936; James W. Goldthwaite, "The Governor's Road from Rochester to Wolfeboro," *New Hampshire Highways*, May, 1931, 2-5. Wentworth believed these roads would cut 40 and 100 miles respectively from the traveling distance to Charlestown and Stonington. See Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, July 3, 1769, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 7.


*NHSP*, 7:275, 278, 284, 306.

Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, Mar. 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6. During John Wentworth's term as Governor the quitrent on Crown lands was one shilling per hundred acres. For any period from one to ten years after the granting of land, the quitrent could be waived in favor of one ear of Indian corn. John felt that New Hampshire's requirements were much less strict than in other provinces. See William H. Fry, *New Hampshire as a Royal Province* (New York, 1908), 293; A. S. Batchellor, *Laws of New Hampshire*, 3:441; and Wentworth to John Nelson, Mar. 29, 1770, Letter Book no. 1, 341.

The Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, July 9, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6; Board of Trade to the King, Aug. 4, 1768, PRO, C.O.5/942; Wentworth to Hillsborough, Sept. 23, 1771, PRO, C.O.5/930 and T.1/493; *NHSP*, 18:652-53, and 7:278, 283-84, 306. Somewhat strangely, in 1772 Hillsborough wrote to Wentworth that the Board of Trade approved of his use of the quitrent receipts for roads, but from then on would like the Governor to get the Board's approval first. It seems highly unlikely Wentworth would have proceeded to use Crown money in
this way without permission. Perhaps the Board forgot that they had approved the project in 1768. Or the reason may have lain with Hillsborough, always a stickler for details and ever ready to point out to Wentworth his errors and shortcomings. See Hillsborough to Wentworth, Aug. 7, 1772, PRO, C.O.5/947. On Wentworth's success in collecting quitrents see Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, April 20, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/938.


38 Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism, 50; Leonard W. Labaree, Royal Government in America (New York, 1958 /19307), 378n; NHSP, 7:129-144.


41 NHSP, 7:175, 178.

42 NHSP, 7:182.

43 NHSP, 7:184-86.

44 Board of Trade to the King, Aug. 3, the Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, Aug. 13, and Wentworth to Hillsborough, Nov. 7, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6; NHSP, 7:191-97.

45 NHSP, 7:198-214; Wentworth to Paul Wentworth, Nov. 15, 1768, Letter Book no. 1, 155.

46 NHSP, 7:213-19.

47 NHSP, 7:228; An Act for Dividing the Province into Counties, Apr. 27, 1769, PRO, C.O.5/936; Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Apr. 20, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/938; John Wentworth, The Wentworth Genealogy (Boston, 1878), 1:xix, 18; Hunt, Town Names, 55. Hunt relates that Cheshire County in England was the site of one of the Wentworth family estates, but I have not been able to verify this.
48. NHSP, 7:229.


51. Parker, Wolfeborough, 54, 83-84; Robert F. Meader, The Saga of a Palace: The Story of Wentworth House at Wolfeboro, New Hampshire (Wolfeboro, N.H., 1962); Inventory of John Wentworth's Wolfeboro Estate, Hammond Transcripts; Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, n.d., Masonian Papers, 3:44; NHHS, Collections, 3:283-84; Wentworth to Joseph Trumbull, Sept. 24, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 285-86. The reconstruction of the Wolfeboro house, which burned in 1820, is speculative. Parker was the first to do this, but Meader's reinterpretation is better informed and probably more accurate.


54. Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:100, 104. Wentworth is quoted on 100.


56. Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:100, 126; Daniell, Eleazar Wheelock," 21. John also felt a moral commitment to Indians that was unusual for his time. To a request from Wheelock for land for an unfortunate band of Indians, he once replied: "I most sincerely pity these poor people and shall heartily rejoice to have them under my protection, to have an opportunity of rendering them the benevolence due to Humanity, which I fear has been too much neglected toward Indians in general wherever Europeans have come." See Wentworth to Wheelock, Jan. 12, 1770, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 770112.
57 Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:104; Daniell, "Eleazar Wheelock," 15-16.

58 Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:105, 107, 109. Cleaveland is quoted on 107.

59 Daniell, "Eleazar Wheelock," 19-21, 24-25, 29-30; Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:114, 117.

60 Wentworth to the Bishop of London, April 28, 1770, Wheelock Papers DCA, 770278.1; Ranna Cossit to the Reverend Dr. Hind, Mar. 9, 1773, Ibid., 773209.

61 Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:115-20; Bernhard Knollenberg, Origin of the American Revolution, 1759-1766 (New York, 1960), 1-2, 81-86. Wentworth is quoted in Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:117; Wheelock is quoted on 116. The most thorough, recent account of relations between the Anglican Church and the American colonies is Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York, 1962).

62 In 1773 John attempted to link the school with the Anglican Church by having one of Wheelock's former students and a tutor at the college, Sylvanus Ripley, appointed as assistant and eventual successor to the rector of Anglican King's Chapel in Boston. Ripley considered the position but, knowing he would have to take orders in the Church of England, eventually decided against it. Wentworth, naturally, was unhappy with this decision. A friend of Ripley's wrote to Wheelock at the time: "The Governor it seems is not pleased to meet with a rebuff in his application for a Son of Dartmouth to become a Son of the Church. But he must have too much candor and Judgement to desire a man to strain his Conscience for the sake of swallowing a Gown. I wish he would send an Indian to Dartmouth and educate him with Episcopal money and then he might with a better face be sent home for orders." See Wheelock Papers, DCA, 773513, 774131, 774152, 774228.2, and Henry Caner to Wentworth, Sept. 25, Nov. 13, Nov. 22, Dec. 6, 1773, and Mar. 14, 1774, University of Bristol Library, Mss. D.M. 388, Caner Letter Book.

63 Following an unsuccessful attempt to have the Assembly make a grant to the college, Wentworth wrote to Wheelock: "Does it not prove the necessity of a college in a country where legislators will not grant an encouragement to Literature." (Wheelock Papers, DCA, 77129.1) That Wheelock was appreciative of Wentworth and his endeavors for the college was made apparent in a letter he sent to fellow minister, Soloman Williams. "The Governor," he wrote, "is a very dear Man, and I think his Judgment is on the right side, and he appears unwearyed in doing
and endeavoring Good to this Cause." (Ibid., 772209.1) Also see Ibid., 771555.1, 772558.1, 773612, 774672.1; NHSP, 7:260, 274, 314, 323; Chase, Dartmouth College, 2:648.

64 On John Wentworth's attendance at the first three commencements of the college, see Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:254-55, and Wheelock Papers, DCA, 771555.1, 772508.3. Also see Chase, 1:253, 264-65, 291-93; DCA, 773513; NHHS, Collections, 9:73.

65 NHSP, 7:232, 283-84.


68 Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:142-46.

69 Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:147-53.

70 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, June 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 2, fol. 6.
Almost immediately on arriving in New Hampshire in 1767, John Wentworth plunged eagerly into the work awaiting him as Governor. According to his instructions he set about drawing up an exact account of the sources of funds for the government in New Hampshire, including the fees taken for granting land, and a report on the current state of quitrents in his province. Concerned with military readiness, he inspected Fort William and Mary at the harbor's mouth in Newcastle, the province's only defense against attack from the sea, and within several months made a tour to review the various regiments of provincial militia. Made aware in July of some settlers near New Hampshire's eastern boundary being kept off their land by claimants from eastern Massachusetts (Maine), John did not hesitate to involve himself in the controversy. He was convinced that his own people were right, and wrote to Governor Bernard of Massachusetts making clear his determination to stand by the boundary as originally drawn.

Not the least of John's energies went into his duties as Surveyor General of the woods. Early in July he informed Peter Randolph, Surveyor General of Customs for the southern district in Williamsburg, that he had "private Intelligence" of masts, yards, and bowsprits being clandestinely shipped out of Virginia and the Carolinas for Havana where they were used in masting Spanish men-of-war. As Surveyor General of the woods
he was determined to halt this treasonous traffic and asked for Randolph's help. Wentworth's concern ranged over all the colonies, but focused most closely near home. He found that people in the backcountry of New England, especially in Maine, had broken the law for so long by cutting Crown timber, that they no longer had any respect for royal authority. This he was going to change. He sent a deputy surveyor, Joshua Loring, out to seize illegally cut logs, and he badgered Governor Bernard for a proclamation warning against further depredations on the King's woods. In August he prosecuted and won his first timber case in the Boston vice-admiralty court. Although the logs, which were sold at auction, did not bring enough to pay court costs, Wentworth was convinced that the case would serve as an example of his determination to stop illegal cutting and thus act as a deterrent in the future. By September he could write to Whitehall with optimism about British forest policy in America.

John Wentworth took all of his responsibilities seriously. Yet one concern took precedence over all others. That was the maintenance of peace and respect for royal authority in New Hampshire. In England during the Stamp Act episode, John had been made acutely aware of the seriousness with which high British officials had viewed the acts of violence and disrespect perpetrated against officers of the crown in America. Many had considered the colonial actions a direct threat to the English constitution, and John had been in the Commons himself as George Grenville referred to threats of "open rebellion," even "revolution," emanating from America. In the words of Horace
Walpole, "the insult to Parliament was unparalleled and accompanied by every kind of aggravating circumstance." In the House of Lords the Earl of Hardwicke had called the consideration on America "the greatest in its extent and consequences, that ever came before parliament," while the Earl of Sandwich accused the Americans of simply wanting "to get loose from the Act of Navigation." Grenville's answer to what he considered this colonial outrage was to enforce the Stamp Act. Fortunately, cooler heads had prevailed. The moderate, conciliatory policy of the Rockingham Administration eventually resulted in repeal. Yet this decision was far from unanimous and the many strong feelings raised against the colonies were not easily assuaged. Following passage of the repeal bill, thirty-three peers signed a written denunciation of the Rockingham Ministry for its weakness in dealing with the American problem. Even a friend of America, Lord Camden, stated that on the next such occurrence "Force must be used." The Earl of Northington pointed out that the Declaratory Act now provided the basis for introducing a police force into the colonies.4

Wentworth had returned to New Hampshire with these threats still ringing in his ears. If the British system of empire were to be given a chance to work, there could be no more outbursts in the colonies such as those that marked the opposition to the Stamp Act. The next time it happened, as he well knew, retaliation was likely. The consequences of that might easily be disaster. In order to minimize potential reactions to any new British policy, John realized he would
need the earliest possible intelligence from England. Not willing to rely on Whitehall for the most rapid or complete information, he instructed Alexander Yeats, a London stationer, to forward "papers of the latest Date by every Vessell... Especially if any thing of Consequence Occurs." On receiving a vote of the House of Commons from Yeats a short time later, John asked him to continue "to inquire prudently and write me frequently." To Stephen Apthorp in Bristol, he wrote of his desire to know everything that occurred in England relative to America. He also wanted to be informed of what was happening in other colonies and when Joshua Loring, his deputy surveyor, set out for Canada in July, John told him to send back "frequent Advice of all Matters Local, Political, Commercial, etc... as I am desirous to form a just Idea of British America."^5

John Wentworth could not control the situation in other provinces, but he would do his utmost to maintain an obedient disposition in New Hampshire. From the moment he arrived he was sensitive to the general political atmosphere in his province, taking steps to make it as favorable to his position as possible. One of his few means of direct influence was patronage, the offices and appointments that were his as Governor to distribute. Although he lamented the severe limitations placed on him in this area, John was intent on using this power to his best possible advantage. Ten days after his commission was read he nominated Peter Gilman, John Sherburne, and Thomas Westbrook Waldron for a vacant position on the Council. These three men represented families long inveterate enemies of the Wentworths and their interests in New Hampshire. Out of personal
inclination and for obvious political reasons, Wentworth felt it was time to mend these broken fences and eliminate another source of divisiveness in the province. He also turned his attention to influential members of the Assembly, such as Josiah Bartlett of Kingston, whom he appointed Justice of the Peace in September. Two years later he made Bartlett a Lieutenant Colonel in the militia.  

Wentworth's appointments during his first few months in office reflected more a commitment to a long-range plan than a reaction to any immediate threat, for the political situation he found in New Hampshire in 1767 was largely pleasing to him. It was natural for the Governor in his official correspondence to want to put the best face on conditions in his colony; thus he wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, "The Inhabitants of this Province are remarkably quiet and happy, and as far as I can discover, universally, indeed I believe without exception, are disposed to the justest and most ready obedience and dependence on the British Government." That Wentworth really believed this was obvious in his personal letters. He told Stephen Apthorp that "Whatever Surmises may have Arisen or disgust taken place against the other Provinces, New Hampshire is not in the least involv'd in it. They are obedient faithful Subjects and ready to exert their utmost Power to support and defend the British Government." And he singled out for praise the Assembly, which he found "disposed to the most cheerful observance of Every recommendation and to pursue the Business before them with such temper and respect as may obtain an Approbation of their prudence and Loyalty."
New Hampshire would, indeed, present a happy prospect for any royal governor and John Wentworth had every right to be optimistic. But at this time New Hampshire was not particularly exceptional, for since the repeal of the Stamp Act all of the colonies had been relatively peaceful. Some new British measures, however, were about to change all that. Strong dissent would soon be forthcoming in larger provinces such as Massachusetts and Virginia, and Wentworth could not expect to keep New Hampshire isolated from this reaction.

When Wentworth left England the Pitt Administration, which had succeeded that of Rockingham, was in control. Pitt had earlier refused to join the Rockinghamites, but his favorable attitude toward America was well known and provided good reason for optimism that moderate policies would emanate from Whitehall. By 1767, however, it was apparent that the new administration was not living up to expectations on either side of the Atlantic. The main reason lay in Pitt's decline; he was no longer the man he once had been. Old, physically and mentally ill, once known affectionately as the Great Commoner but now become the Earl of Chatham by grant of the King, Pitt was not capable of providing leadership. As a result the Ministry was divided and weak and the only member who spoke forcefully and carried weight in Parliament, Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend, was more often in agreement with the opposition than with his fellow Cabinet members. The failure to muzzle Townshend or to oust him was itself a sign of the administration's weakness.
Charles Townshend, at one time head of the Board of Trade, knew his way around American affairs and since the early days of the last French war had talked of the need to raise a revenue in the colonies. He voted to repeal the Stamp Act, but only because the act was obviously inexpedient and not worth going to war over. In May, 1767, he presented to Parliament a new set of plans by which the colonies would again be expected to substantially contribute to the support of their own defense. His ideas were so well received that early in June, at the same time John Wentworth arrived in New Hampshire, the House of Commons passed several new American trade and revenue acts. The major bill of these Townshend Acts called for import duties on lead, glass, paper, paint, and tea coming into the colonies. The preamble to the act stated that the revenue raised was to be used in America "for making a more certain and adequate Provision for ... the Administration of Justice, and the Support of Civil Government, in such Provinces where it shall be found necessary; and toward further defraying the Expences of defending, protecting, and securing the said Dominions." The colonists had opposed the Stamp Act because it had called for an internal tax. Why not then, according to Townshend's thinking, raise the money by import duties, something the Americans had always accepted as part of the trade system of the British Empire? To enforce this trade system more rigidly than in the past and thus insure that the revenue was raised, another bill was passed creating a new Board of Customs Commissioners to be resident in America.
If Charles Townshend thought these measures would be easily accepted in the colonies, he was wrong. At the end of August the Boston Evening-Post published news of Townshend's revenue acts. This opened up a running debate in the Boston newspapers between those who saw the taxation plan as "an open and daring attack upon the natural and constitutional rights" of the colonists, and others who termed such opposition the work of "vile incendiaries" attempting to "alienate the minds of a truly loyal and affectionate people from their dependence on the Mother Country." In October arguments raged back and forth over proposals made to stop the importation of all British manufactured goods. At the Boston town meeting on October 28, resolutions were adopted listing more than fifty items that should not be imported after December 31, and encouraging colonials to make up for this by increasing their own manufacturing. No mention was made in these resolutions of rights, liberties, or any other constitutional issues. The argument was based solely on the economic hardship the British measures would cause the town. Not wanting to be isolated in their opposition to the Crown, Boston's selectmen sent copies of their vote to other towns in Massachusetts Bay and to major towns in the other colonies.

John Wentworth was well aware of what was happening in Massachusetts, just the sort of thing he had hoped would not occur. When he wrote to Peter Gilman in Exeter about the matter late in November, he made no attempts to conceal his contempt for the actions taken in Boston. "I am not a little surpris'd," he stated caustically, "that any people of Common
Modesty only, should assume to themselves such a Shapeless Importance; or should presume to diminish the Consequences of others by supposing themselves an infallible Rule to N. England and that every Town will receive politicks from them, or follow their Example because said and Done by the great and wise ones of Boston Town meeting. ... I expect shortly to hear These powerful Stile themselves the Elect of all the Select in British America." In response to the Boston call for more self-sufficiency and less reliance on luxury goods from England, John claimed that he had no objection to hard work and economizing, but could not see that these goals would any more result from "Noisy Declamations, Subscriptions, and Epistolary Circulations, than that Cucumbers and Cabbages will be best produc'd by the Rays ... from the Moon, which has as much living Heat as these Clamorous professions have of true Operating dispassioned Virtue." John Wentworth was confident that the people in his province would not be mindlessly led by what he considered mere rhetoric. Portsmouth would provide Boston with no support and, he hoped, with Gilman's help neither would Exeter. 12

In fact, Boston's own merchants were not enthusiastic about the non-importation plan. This is understandable since the move was not likely to have anything but a negative effect on their business. Nevertheless, support for the boycott began gradually to grow in other Massachusetts towns, in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and further south in other colonies. In early December appeared in Philadelphia newspapers the first of a series of twelve letters from "A Farmer in
Pennsylvania" strongly championing non-importation, but from a constitutional standpoint. The farmer, John Dickinson, an influential lawyer and member of the Pennsylvania gentry, admitted that Parliament did have the right to regulate colonial trade, but no authority whatsoever to lay taxes on America, either internal such as the stamp tax, or external which the new British acts represented. Though the tax was on trade, its purpose was not regulation but to raise a revenue. Americans were not represented in Parliament, thus their property was being taken from them without their permission, an act patently in violation of the English constitution. To Dickinson, the Townshend Act marked another dangerous step in a long Parliamentary program to subvert the rights and liberties of Englishmen in America. The Letters from a Farmer embodied the most cogent statement yet made concerning constitutional rights of colonial Americans, and they were soon reprinted in nearly every colonial newspaper. 13

John Dickinson's writings caused little reaction in conservative Pennsylvania. They did, however, provide more radical Massachusetts with an important impetus to increase the tempo of opposition to the Townshend Act. On January 20, 1768, the Massachusetts House of Representatives petitioned the King for repeal of the Townshend legislation. Of more importance, the House on February 11, approved a circular letter to be sent to all of the other North American assemblies urging them to follow suit. A few days later New Hampshire received its copy which was laid before the Assembly for consideration. As it was near the end of the session, the only action taken was to
send Massachusetts a response of general approval. The first province to actively join the Massachusetts campaign was Virginia which, on April 14, agreed on petitions to the King and Parliament, and on a letter to the other colonies informing them of their action. By this time, news of the Massachusetts letter had reached London where it drew an angry response from the Secretary of State for the colonies, Lord Hillsborough. In a circular letter of his own dated April 21, Hillsborough called on all of the colonial governors "to defeat this flagitious Attempt to disturb the public Peace by prevailing upon the Assembly of your Province to take no Notice of it." This was a large order, as the Secretary must have realized, for he added that if any "Countenance" was given "this seditious Paper," the governors were under orders to dissolve their assemblies.14

In the mean time, resistance to the Townshend Act continued to mount, especially in Massachusetts. In March a renewed interest in non-importation was shown by Boston's merchants. Meeting at the British Coffee-House they agreed not to import any English goods for twelve months if merchants in other provinces would agree. Accordingly, they sent their resolution to other port cities. At this same time a potentially explosive situation was building between Boston radicals and the new Board of Customs Commissioners which had been created by the Townshend measures and headquartered in the city the previous November. The existence of the Board was visible proof of Britain's determination to enforce its laws in the colonies,
and especially in New England. As such, antagonism was inevitable.  

During the months after the Board's establishment, minor customs employees were harassed, both verbally and physically. In March when a mob formed outside the home of William Burch, a member of the Board, the Commissioners began to be uneasy about their own safety. Two weeks later, another Commissioner, Charles Paxton, was hung in effigy on the anniversary of the Stamp Act repeal. Open violence finally broke out on June 10 when the sloop Liberty, owned by wealthy merchant John Hancock, was seized on order of the Commissioners for allegedly smuggling wine. The Collector of Customs for the port, the officer charged with confiscation of the ship, was John Wentworth's old friend from England, Joseph Harrison. Upon completion of his duty, Harrison found himself face to face with an enraged mob. He and Benjamin Hallowell, the Comptroller, who had gone with him were stoned, beaten, and chased through the streets and Harrison's eighteen-year-old son who had accompanied them was dragged by the hair. Later that evening the mob broke the windows in the Collector's house and then burned his prize sailboat. Harrison received such a beating that he was forced to stay in bed for two days. On the thirteenth he fled to the protection of Castle William in the harbor. Four of the five Commissioners had already taken refuge on board the man-of-war Romney. 

During the spring John Wentworth watched the developments in Massachusetts and elsewhere, but remained confident that the trouble would not spread to New Hampshire. In March
he wrote Shelburne that in spite of repeated solicitations from Boston, there was not the slightest inclination in his province to take part in any protest. The people of New Hampshire would continue their trade as usual with England and they had no intention of pursuing manufacturing of their own. For much of this, John gave credit to the Assembly. But neither did he fail to mention his own efforts which, he claimed, had "prevented a Single Instance of Opposition, disrespect, or even discontent, taking place and succeeded in inculcating and confirming . . . effectual principles of Loyalty and Obedience to His Majesty and the Parliament." In May John wrote to Rockingham to try to explain what this latest trouble was all about. He told his patron that the reaction was similar to that against the Stamp Act. He had opposed that act, but he made it clear that he did not consider the Townshend Act in the same light. Its removal he called the "senseless object" of a few "factious minds" propagating "groundless Fears and anxieties" among the people. Nevertheless, he assured Rockingham, there was no need to worry because the people cherished their ties with the mother country and could not long be fooled. Wentworth praised New Hampshire for opposing the various schemes against trade. He also admitted that by taking pains to receive early knowledge of these plans, he had been able to plant the seeds of resistance that guaranteed their rejection in New Hampshire before they ever arrived. 

Thus the news in June of the open violence connected with the Liberty incident must have been highly disturbing to John. It struck especially close to home because of the
involvement of two personal friends, Joseph Harrison and John Temple. Temple, who lived in Boston and whom John had known since his college days, had from 1761 held the office of Lieutenant Governor of New Hampshire as an honorary title. Retaining that position, he was in 1767 also appointed as one of the five commissioners to sit on the new American Customs Board. It is not surprising, then, that on receiving word of flight of the Commissioners from Boston for their safety, John invited them to New Hampshire. The peaceful atmosphere and good will of the people in his province, he told them, would guarantee their welcome. Two days later the Commissioners thanked Wentworth, but declined his offer. This was probably for the best, because things were now beginning to stir in New Hampshire too.

In its brief reply to the Massachusetts circular letter in February, the Assembly expressed confidence that the next elected House in New Hampshire would take steps to follow the recommendations of the Massachusetts legislature. The prediction proved correct. On the first of June the new Assembly considered the Massachusetts letter once again. This time the House selected a committee to draw up a petition to the King and his ministers. With the customary summer adjournment beginning on June 9, the committee would have better than two months to word this important document. Wentworth had wanted more than anything to avoid such an eventuality. By late June he had received Hillsborough's vehement instructions which put even more pressure on him for a satisfactory solution to the problem. The House had already replied to Massachusetts and
John had done nothing about it. For this he might be excused as it occurred long before the Secretary's instructions arrived. Now, however, the Assembly was considering a petition to the King. When John sat down with pen and paper to reply to Hillsborough, he faced the difficult necessity of putting the situation in New Hampshire in the best possible light.

Wentworth explained that when the Massachusetts letter arrived, he "strenuously" urged that it be ignored. The "most sensible and judicious" representatives had argued, however, that to do this would mean tacit approbation. So although he would have preferred no reply, he told Hillsborough, he finally settled for a negative answer. The Governor admitted that the message sent to the Massachusetts House was "express'd in too civil and polite terms," but he claimed that it had the intended effect of discouraging any hopes harbored in that province that New Hampshire might join "any Union or combination." Had Hillsborough seen the actual letter, he would have been astounded at Wentworth's interpretation of it. It was true that the New Hampshire Assembly made no mention of specifically joining with others and put off taking any direct action at this time. Nevertheless, the letter's contents hardly constituted a discouragement. The Massachusetts measures, it read, were "highly approved." In fact, they were so apt that it was felt nothing more could be added. Further, there were hopes and assurances that the next Assembly would follow the suggestions of the circular letter. John, indeed, made the best of New Hampshire's reply. He then went on to reiterate his earlier claims that there was not the least interest in
boycotts in New Hampshire, and that the people felt a strong sense of allegiance to Great Britain. Avoiding any mention of the recently proposed petition to the King, he laid claim to having so far prevented any response on the subject from the current Assembly. Finally, he assured Hillsborough that, "pursuant to His Majesty's comands," if any attempt to answer were made he would prorogue or dissolve the legislature. This was a course of action Wentworth wished to avoid if at all possible, for it likely would mean the rapid deterioration of his relationship with the Assembly and an almost certain loss of his effectiveness. His only alternative was to somehow prevent the proposed petition to the King in opposition to the Townshend Act. He would have to await the Assembly's next move and be prepared for any eventuality.

John Wentworth's thoughts were distracted from these troubles by personal grief in the middle of July when his younger brother, Thomas, died following a protracted illness. Thomas left a widow and five children and John took a personal interest in their welfare. His attention was not diverted from public affairs for long, however. On August 1, a special town meeting was called in Portsmouth for the purpose of instructing the town's representatives to the Assembly which would reconvene later in the month. At the meeting the representatives were told they must use all their power to see that a petition for redress of grievances in regard to the Townshend Acts was drawn up and forwarded to the King, along with all due assurances of loyalty to the Crown. There now seemed little doubt that the Assembly would proceed along these lines. John had hoped
this could be avoided, but it was also about this time that he began to sympathize somewhat with the resistance of the colonists.

In a letter to a friend in England, Dr. Anthony Belham, written not long after the Portsmouth meeting, John expressed his continued disapproval of the actions taking place in the colonies. He did not, however, place complete blame for this on the Americans especially, he noted, when they are "goaded into Excess by either a Deficiency or contempt of conciliatory prudence in those who have to carry a disagreeable Measure into Execution." Wentworth was referring to the Customs Commissioners in Boston. It seems that his change of opinion about these men was influenced by his friend Joseph Harrison who worked for them but who, since his beating during the Liberty affair, had been increasingly dissatisfied with his superiors. John did not see how the rest of the people could be "condemn'd for resentment when every Officer in the department complain and groan under . . . dignify'd, supercilious Austeritys they can scarcely endure." John had no quarrel with the Townshend Act. He made no mention of the constitutionality of the duties or of any such arguments being used against them. They were the law of the British Government; he accepted them. As he put it, "they are not for me to consider." Reflecting his own emphasis in governing, his objection was to the manner in which the act was implemented. The "contemptuous positives" and "exclusive Edicts" of the enforcing officers were bound to produce a reaction among the people. John likened the customs officials to naval officers telling their sailors, "'obey the
Act and be damn'd.' The Answer," he went on, "is readily
known from London Bridge thro' all his Majestys Dominions
without enquiring what it is. All English Men will huzza out
'We'll be damn'd if we do'." Had only a little moderation
been used, some honesty and conciliation shown, John was
convinced that the Townshend Act would have been readily
accepted. Unfortunately, he lamented, "Not one healing Measure
has yet appear'd," and he wondered if England, Scotland, or
Ireland would put up with the same thing.

Wentworth told Belham that by acting in an open manner
he had prevented any violent outbursts in New Hampshire. All
that was necessary to keep the people respectful and satisfied
was to act with "Candor and reason." John noted that America
was quite capable of the increased manufacturing being urged
by the radicals in Massachusetts, and he warned that if the
British Government did not begin to treat the colonists with
more respect, within sixty years they could produce all of
their own needs and a surplus for export. It was simply a
matter of sound policy. He hoped the British would back off,
let the disturbances and resentments die down, and then begin
again in a much more judicious and sensitive manner. A key to
success would lie in allowing officers such as himself, men
familiar with the needs and subtleties of the situation, to
act with more "discretionary power." In this way Britain would
have no more trouble with her colonies. "Otherwise," he
exclaimed prophetically, "within a Century she will have the
Love and Alliance of a Sister State that sprung from her own
Bowells."²²
If John Wentworth had any hopes left of preventing a petition to the King, they were dashed on August 24 when the Assembly read a letter from the Virginia House of Burgesses. Following Massachusetts' lead, the Burgesses had petitioned the King and sent a remonstrance to Parliament. They hoped that other colonies would do the same so that through union, their constitutional rights might be protected. New Hampshire now had not one, but two examples to follow. Three days later the House voted to send a letter to the Virginia Burgesses, concurring with their sentiments and informing them that New Hampshire was also petitioning the King. The petition, approved on the same day, expressed a fear of loss of constitutional liberties through taxation without consent and asked for relief from the recent acts of Parliament. It was to be signed by the Speaker, Peter Gilman, and forwarded to New Hampshire's agent at court, Barlow Trecothick. John Wentworth did not dissolve the Assembly, but that afternoon, the twenty-seventh of August, he adjourned it to October 18 in order that a committee could consider necessary measures for creating a supply bill.  

On September 1, John wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough. He observed that the people were upset about the Townshend Act, but that there had been no trouble in New Hampshire. He made no mention of the petition to the King. On the twenty-seventh the Governor rode out of town for Boston. He was going to see Joseph Harrison "in order," as Harrison later noted, "to encourage and cheer me up a little." He doubtless also wanted to see for himself the situation in the Massachusetts metropolis.
What John gained was confirmation of his beliefs about the Customs Commissioners. He found Harrison a beaten man and he attributed it to the Commissioners. They were using the Collector to do their dirty-work and thus bear the brunt of the radical attack. The seizure of John Hancock's Liberty provided only the best example. Harrison's friends seemed to think he was being used as a guinea pig. According to them, he was sent out purposely to draw the rage of the mob. The wounding of such a worthy officer of the service would do much to discredit the movement opposing the revenue acts. John was given even more reason for disliking the Customs Board when he discovered that they had dismissed his brother-in-law, John Fisher, from his position as Collector at Salem. Unfortunately, the actions of the Commissioners showed no signs of the moderation that John felt was needed to calm the situation in America and begin to rebuild faith and trust between the colonies and the mother country. On the contrary, everything they did seemed designed to aggravate the trouble. John had visible evidence of this himself when, on September 28, he looked out to Boston harbor to see more than a dozen warships and transports flying the British flag and carrying two regiments of troops that had been requested by the Commissioners of the Customs. The soldiers disembarked on the thirtieth and, "drums beating, fifes playing, and colours flying," marched first to the Town House and then to the Common. The people remained calm and there were no incidents, yet the tension and anxiety produced by this major turn of events could not be ignored. Boston had taken on the appearance of an armed camp.
With these burdens on his mind, Wentworth returned to Portsmouth in the middle of October and shortly began to inform his friends in England of the deteriorating circumstances in the colonies and of his apprehensions. Writing to Rockingham, he repeated much of what he had told Anthony Belham and again, though now more positively, singled out the Customs Commissioners as the root of the problem. Their "superciliousness" and little disguised hatred for America, John reported, gave rise to vitriolic feelings against them which eventually were transferred to the revenue acts. Now, he believed, there was little hope of ever enforcing these laws. The opposition was rooted too deeply. The not unworkable plans of the British Government had thus been ruined by what he told Paul Wentworth was "the unprecedented Weakness, Pride and fatal interested Designs of my fellow Servants." The one member of the Board that Wentworth had any respect for was John Temple. When Temple originally urged that the new measures be instituted with caution and prudence, the others insulted and ignored him. This angered John and he exclaimed to Paul Wentworth that "All the paper imported since their arrival wou'd not suffice to record their Arrogance and unavailing Management." When that "management" was known in England, he told Rockingham, there should no longer be any surprise at the failure of the customs service in America.  

John also reported to his patron on the arrival of the soldiers, and in connection with this made what is perhaps the clearest, most cogent statement of his beliefs on how affairs in America should be handled by the British. "I am at a loss
to inform your Lordship," he wrote, "of any real use or necessity for this armament: it cannot be advantageous to the revenue, which will not suffice to pay half the expense. If it is intended to secure the dependence of the colonies, I fear it will exceedingly operate the other way. Perhaps military power may preserve the subjection of conquests; but I believe it is positively true, that the just dependence of the British colonies on this continent can be ascertained only by a wise, moderate, and well-timed reformation and strengthening of their government, gradually introducing the beneficial regulations necessary, always securing measures to take place before they were proposed publicly, which may always be effected, nay, in many instances, cause them to be solicited, if time and faithful attention were cordially exerted here, upon seasonable direction and independent support from Administration."26

As at the time of the Stamp Act, John Wentworth was not concerned with the constitutional questions that had been raised. It could be argued that these were the root issues in the controversy, but he did not believe they were. To Wentworth these were effects, not causes. This talk of protecting basic rights and liberties was mainly rhetoric raised in response to clumsy, insensitive implementation of British policies. This, to John, was where the real source of the trouble lay, especially in the antagonism created by the stupidities of the Customs Commissioners. The constitutional issues need never have arisen had Britain's colonial policy been conducted wisely from the first. To a point, Wentworth
may have been right. The Sugar Act of 1764, designed to raise a revenue but by a tax on trade, brought relatively mild complaints from the colonies. The Stamp Act of the following year, however, an obvious direct tax for revenue having nothing to do with trade, a precedent in the history of the English colonies, was what provoked Americans to closely examine their rights under the English constitution. Out of this had come the familiar cry of "no taxation without representation."

John Wentworth had been against the Stamp Act, but he found nothing particularly objectionable about the current Townshend Act that was beginning to provoke as much opposition. It might be asked, what would have been the result had the Townshend Act, instead of the Stamp Act, been passed and introduced into the colonies in 1765 with all the caution and prudence advocated by John Wentworth? As an act on trade, which the colonists had long been familiar with and had not questioned Parliament's right to pass, the chances are great it would not have produced opposition nearly as severe as did the Stamp Act. If such had been the case, constitutional arguments against the revenue acts might quite possibly have remained undeveloped. John Wentworth, then, could have been correct in seeing the major source of discontent in the method of implementation, and not in any perceived subversion of the English constitution. What he did not see, though, was that the Stamp Act had made constitutional questions a major factor in the continuing dispute between the colonies and England. It had raised the Americans' consciousness of basic liberties to a high level. This fact had combined with the inept handling
of the Townshend Act to produce the worsening situation that Wentworth saw in the colonies in late 1768. Even had the act been applied slowly, with caution and tact, as he had wished, it is unlikely that, as an act designed to raise a revenue, it would have been accepted at this time. The Stamp Act had changed all that. Constitutional issues could not be easily set aside or ignored. John Wentworth's perception of the situation and its solution was at least partially correct. What he did not realize was that the time had passed when good will alone could solve the problem.

Wentworth could not see all of the complexities of the British Empire, but he was a good judge of human nature. The revenue acts would have been accepted, he believed, had they not been thrown in the colonists' face in a haughty, demeaning manner. He could see that people were reacting to this and he did not blame them. What particularly irked him about the Customs Commissioners was that they were making his job of keeping New Hampshire quiet extremely difficult. Because of this, as he told Paul Wentworth, "all my Art and Assiduity hath been necessarily exerted to keep this Province Steady and right." 27 John had become particularly sensitive to this since the recent receipt of a letter from the Earl of Hillsborough.

John Wentworth's letter of late June, describing the Assembly's brief reply in February to the Massachusetts circular letter, had not gone unnoticed by the Colonial Secretary. Despite John's attempts to make this reply appear unimportant, Hillsborough rightly suspected there was more to it than the Governor had let on. Hillsborough wrote back that he hoped he
could conclude that the Assembly "meant at least to treat that Letter with the Contempt it deserves; but as you have not thought fit to transmit the Proceedings themselves, and as there is (you will pardon my Observation,) an Obscurity in the Manner in which you have expressed yourself on the Subject, that leaves many Parts of the transaction in a State of great Doubt, I am not able to form a Judgment whether His Majesty's Orders of the 21st of April have or have not been duly observed. If the Answer given to the letter from the Province of Massachusetts's Bay," the Secretary continued," contains an Approbation of a Petition to his Majesty, which however filled with Expressions of Loyalty and Obedience, does in Effect deny or draw into Question the Power and Authority of Parliament to enact Laws binding upon the Colonies in all cases whatever, it would have been your Duty to have put a Stop to every Proceeding of such a Tendency, and you will be highly blameable if you did not." Not only had the New Hampshire Assembly expressed its agreement with the Massachusetts petition, it had now approved one of its own to be sent to England. Further, Wentworth had ignored his orders to dissolve the House. The pressure was on. He had received a thinly veiled warning from the Colonial Secretary. As if John needed an added inducement to forward a complete and punctual report of the Assembly's proceedings, Hillsborough also included a copy of the four year old charges against Benning Wentworth for deficiency in that area.28

Wentworth had desperately wanted to keep New Hampshire a model of a dutiful and peaceful province. He prided himself that so far there had been no suggestion of violence, but he
had not been able to prevent the Assembly from considering and taking action on the Massachusetts circular letter. He knew now that he would no longer be able to hide this fact from England. Faced again with describing a bad situation in the best possible terms, John penned a reply to Hillsborough on November 7. He stated that the Assembly had drawn up a petition to the King for relief from the Townshend duties. He then went on to explain that "A Committee was chosen to prepare and send the Petition, who are not yet determin'd to forward any. Whenever they do determine I am assured . . . that it is intended to pray for Relief solely upon their utter inability without any reliance on any other matter whatever." This last statement was not true. John unquestionably had read the petition approved by the House late in August. Though couched in repeated phrases of respectful loyalty, the document made clear the Assembly's denial of any Parliamentary right to tax them. 29 This was what Hillsborough had warned the petition must not do. By asserting that the New Hampshire petition did not call Parliamentary authority into question, John absolved himself from any neglect of duty in not dissolving the Assembly. To do this he had had to lie. He had now to make sure that the petition was not sent.

Wentworth had stated that the committee designated "to prepare and send" the petition had not yet decided to forward it to agent Trecothick for presentation at Court. It was true that the petition had not yet been sent. The man whose responsibility that was and whose signature was needed to make the document official, was Speaker of the House, Peter Gilman.
The committee that had prepared the petition, William Parker, Samuel Livermore, and Jacob Sheafe, may also have still been involved. What is apparent is that Wentworth succeeded in putting pressure on Gilman, and possibly on these other men, not to send the petition. Certainly in Gilman's case this did not take much persuasion for he was against such a radical step anyway and considered himself a friend of the Governor. There are indications that other representatives knew that the petition was not sent; the Assembly was later accused of being "cold in the Cause and . . . indifferent." A logical reason for this can be found in legislative fear that the arrival of the petition in England would lead to certain rejection of the Governor's pending proposal for dividing the province into five counties. John did his best to point out to the House a relationship between the calm, loyal atmosphere in New Hampshire and the province's chances for having the proposal approved. In October, on sending to the Assembly Hillsborough's slightly encouraging remark concerning the counties, he included with it one other paragraph from the Secretary's letter stating that the "steady Resolution" of the province's inhabitants "in refusing to accede to the measures and Proposals which have been urged with so much indecent warmth in other Colonies cannot fail to recommend them" to the Crown. The message was clear, and apparently well taken, for no dissenting voices were raised to question the fate of the petition. Wentworth saved himself from a severe reprimand and possibly worse by preventing New Hampshire from following Massachusetts, Virginia, and other colonies in petitioning the Crown for redress from
the Townshend Act. He thus secured his image in England as one of the few governors in North America who had managed to maintain complete loyalty in his province. At the same time, by not dissolving the Assembly, he had not jeopardized the all-important but fragile positive relationship that existed between himself and the representatives.

One advantage that Wentworth enjoyed in keeping New Hampshire quiet through this difficult period was the reluctance of Portsmouth's merchants to join in the boycott of British goods. This does not mean that there was no resentment against the recent revenue acts. On September 28, a group of merchants met at the home of John Stavers and voted unanimously not to import any tea, glass, paper, or paint after January 1, 1769, until the acts were repealed, and not to consume any tea on which the duty had been paid. A committee was chosen to present these decisions to the other traders in town. Two days later "Americanus," writing in the New Hampshire Gazette, disavowed the use of violence but said the way to gain redress from the oppressive acts was to quit consuming tea and all other imported products. He admitted that such a step would require "Resolution" in the beginning. Apparently there was not enough of this, especially among the commercial class, for a boycott was not instituted in the New Hampshire port for more than a year and a half, and then only halfheartedly. Most of the wealthy and influential merchants in Portsmouth were relatives or friends of the Governor and many of them sat on the Council. These men wielded their power among their lessor colleagues in trade and, much to John Wentworth's relief, kept New Hampshire
out of the boycott movement longer than any other colony. There were some important merchants outside of the Wentworth circle such as Woodbury Langdon, Samuel Cutts, and George Boyd, who opposed the Townshend Act and had pushed for the petition to the Crown. Even they, however, were not willing to risk their profits by joining the boycott.\textsuperscript{31}

By late November, things had again settled down and John wrote to Rockingham that "nothing hath lately occur'd to disturb the general quiet." One hindrance to activities in general was the extremely severe winter that set in. It was so cold that the tidal Piscataqua froze over and people walked between Portsmouth and Newcastle over the ice. John complained that New Hampshire's weather would "give comparative comfort to a Siberian Winter." The bitter cold was not, however, enough to discourage the morbid curiosity of large numbers of people who swarmed to the south side of town on December 30 to see Ruth Blay hanged. She had been convicted of concealing the birth of a child out of wedlock. The infant probably had been stillborn but in a case such as this, where the defendant could not prove that she had not murdered the child, the law called for death. On a last minute appeal from the woman's friends, however, Wentworth issued a reprieve. But it was too late. By the time the message reached the execution site, Sheriff Thomas Packer had carried out the sentence. He reportedly had not wanted to be late for dinner.\textsuperscript{32}

The cold in December kept John close to home and he wisely spent some of the time trying to shore up his position in England. He had maintained regular contact with Rockingham,
but the Marquis and his associates were still out of power and there was little he could do for his friend in America. The able Barlow Trecothick was the province agent in London, but he was finding it increasingly difficult to carry New Hampshire’s interest at court against those who now wielded more political influence. In turn, as a merchant, his own ties to New Hampshire began to weaken when economic opportunities moved elsewhere. Wentworth would rather have had as agent someone that he was close to, someone he could entrust with confidential information and count on to handle with delicacy the many sensitive situations arising during these difficult times. Thus, when Hillsborough wrote that New Hampshire “should have, as formerly, an Agent here” and directed him to take appropriate measures, instead of questioning this order John saw it as an opportunity to appoint a co-agent with Trecothick. Hillsborough had some specific names in mind, but so did the Governor. The man he wanted for the job was Paul Wentworth.33

Paul Wentworth’s background has never been completely clear. Another distant Wentworth relation, he apparently came from Barbadoes to New England, spent some time in Boston and possibly Portsmouth, and went to England about the same time that John Wentworth did in the early 1760’s. There he became, possibly with the exception of Rockingham, John’s closest confidant. The two men lived not far from each other in London, and John was responsible for introducing Paul to the Marquis. Both acquaintances were important to Paul Wentworth for, lacking the ties of John Wentworth, he was clearly a man on the make, seeking money, position, and titles.
By the middle of December, John had sounded out leaders of the House and reported confidently that in the spring Paul Wentworth would be a unanimous choice to serve as agent with Barlow Trecothick. Unfortunately for him, he misjudged the sentiment in the Assembly. When the matter was raised, it was pointed out that New Hampshire already had an agent and, as far as the representatives could see, he was perfectly adequate. John was disappointed, but he at least was able to use the decision to his advantage in England. When he told Hillsborough of the Assembly's determination to continue with a single agent, he let on that he had prevented the House from appointing Paul Wentworth as co-agent so that the Colonial Secretary's friends might have a better chance for the position in the future. Hillsborough in the mean time had discovered that his directive was out of order. He informed Wentworth that he had erroneously assumed New Hampshire had no agent because Trecothick had failed to register his appointment with the Board of Trade. One agent, he told the Governor, was sufficient; his order should be ignored. Wentworth realized that he had lost his chance for a new agent who might be able to do more for him at Whitehall. He would have to continue to rely on Barlow Trecothick and make the best of the situation. To renew the agent's flagging interest in the fate of New Hampshire, John in May chartered a new town to be called Trecothick, and made its namesake one of the proprietors. To Paul Wentworth he promised a Council seat as soon as one became available. He had greater hopes, however, that if John Temple could be convinced to resign as Lieutenant Governor of New Hampshire, Paul might have that post.
This eventuality, John Wentworth told his friend in England, combined with the return of the Rockingham Whigs to power, would give him complete happiness.34

During 1769 John found no respite from the tension of continually trying to reconcile the interests of the British Government and those of his fellow colonists. His attempts to make his position in England as strong as possible did, in fact, prove to be wise, because over the course of the year he became more frustrated by British policies and reactions to his efforts than by anything that took place in the colonies. In February he was still complaining about the Customs Commissioners. Not only had they dismissed another able Crown servant, their secretary Samuel Venner, but their "positive Menaces and injudicious Hauteur," he told Rockingham, were beginning to solidify opposition to royal authority. People were starting to believe that Britain was actually out to oppress them. The prevailing peace in New Hampshire John attributed to what he termed his own "open disinterested Steadiness." This only provided additional evidence to support his belief that there were no basic objections to the revenue acts, only to the way in which they were implemented. As he phrased it, "Men and Manner and not measures are most obnoxious." Eight months later his opinion had not changed when he commented, "God knows they [the Commissioners] richly merit" dissolution.35

In March Governor Wentworth lost his struggle with the Assembly over the supply bill. He was forced to first allow the representatives to draw up an act for dividing the province into counties. The following month he received another rebuff
by the legislature. Resolving to get to the bottom of the controversy with Massachusetts over New Hampshire's northeast boundary, and receiving little satisfaction from Governor Bernard, John ordered that the line be resurveyed. He designated Isaac Rindge, Surveyor General of the province, to carry out the job. Contrary to the Massachusetts charge that the original line of 1741 was in error, Rindge's survey of 100 miles proved that the land being claimed by Massachusetts, including part of the town of Rochester, was clearly in New Hampshire. In April, John reported this good news to the House and made a request for a grant with which to pay Rindge for his services. The representatives voted it down. John made no angry reply. He chose, as with the supply question, to accept the Assembly's decision with no comment. His reticence may have been linked to the Assembly's dormant petition to the Crown. After his hard work to suppress it, he doubtless wanted to do nothing now that might provoke its being sent. The petition was on his mind at this time. Only a few days later, with the supply bill finally enacted and the Assembly safely prorogued, John at last felt confident enough to inform Hillsborough of the fate of the petition. Agreement could not be reached on it, he told the Secretary, so at his suggestion that none be sent, "the House readily approved that the Whole Measure should subside."

In June, 1769, John again traveled to Boston. This time he was beckoned by official rather than private business, although the trip did give him a chance to renew his friendship with Harvard classmate John Adams. The Governor of New Hampshire
along with several other provincial officials including Councillors George Jaffrey, Daniel Rindge, and Jonathan Warner, and the Comptroller of Customs for the Piscataqua, Robert Trail, had been asked to sit on a special court of admiralty in a case involving impressment of seamen. Governor Bernard headed the court which also included Chief Justice Thomas Hutchinson and Secretary Andrew Oliver of Massachusetts, Boston Admiralty Judge Robert Auchmuty, Commodore Samuel Hood, commanding officer of the British fleet in America, and several officials from Rhode Island. The trial, which involved the killing of a British naval officer, was of potentially serious consequence, for not only was Bernard coming under increasing attack by the Boston radicals, but resentment of British military presence, fed by a constant flow of whig propaganda, was growing day by day. 38

The case stemmed from an incident of Saturday morning, April 22, when the frigate Rose, under impressment orders from Commodore Hood, stopped the brig Pitt Packet making for Marblehead with a load of Cadiz salt for its owner, wealthy merchant Robert Hooper. A press gang led by Lieutenant Henry Panton, second in command on the Rose, was sent on board. Convinced that not all the brig's hands were accounted for, Panton ordered a search of the ship which, as he expected, turned up four more men. Hiding in the forepeak and armed variously with a musket, hatchet, fish gig, and harpoon, the four swore they would cut off the limbs of the first man who attempted to take them. After several attempts at persuasion failed, a pistol was fired by a member of the boarding party
wounding one of the resisters. Then, in the words of John Adams who served as defense counsel for the four Pitt Packet sailors, one Michael Corbett drew a line in the cargo of salt and warned, "if you step over that mark again I shall take it as a proof of your determination to impress me and by the eternal God of Heaven, you are a dead man. Ay, my lad says Panton, I have seen a brave fellow before now, took his snuff box out of his pocket, and sniffing up a pinch, resolutely stepped over the line. Corbett instantly threw an harpoon iron, which cutt off the carottid artery and jugular vein. Panton cry'd the rascall has killed me, and fell dead in a few minutes." Reinforcements from the Rose finally subdued the four men who were brought to Boston for trial.

Several factors gave the case significance within Boston's highly charged political atmosphere. The first was the probability that the trial would not be by jury. A Parliamentary act of 1700 stated that decisions by this infrequently called court for crimes committed at sea would, when taking place in the colonies, be made by special commissioners. Such a trial by selected royal officials would provide the radical whigs with but yet another prime example for their argument that the colonies were being methodically subverted by a growing British despotism. Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that none of the Massachusetts Council had been included among the commissioners. In Massachusetts, unlike other royal provinces including New Hampshire, the councillors were chosen by the Assembly and thus were not the Governor's men. The House, in fact, was at this very time accusing the Governor of
trying to have the Council made appointive. It came as no surprise that Bernard named none of the Council to the special court, but the opposition was not about to let such a valuable piece of propaganda go unused. The radical newspaper column, "Journal of the Times," composed by Sam Adams and his associates, reported that "the inhabitants of Boston had the mortification to perceive, that the whole of his Majesty's Council of this province, who had been included in all former commissions, was excluded from the present; while, not only the Council of a neighbouring colony, but even pro. temp. collectors, helped to constitute this court. For such an indignity thrown upon this ancient and loyal province, it is known we are obliged to the generosity and prudence of Governor Bernard." The men Bernard had chosen from his own province to sit on the court, Hutchinson, Oliver, and Auchmuty, were derisively known as his "Cabinet Council." Highlighting the importance of the case was the fact that the three best lawyers in Massachusetts were taking part, John Adams and James Otis for the defense, Jonathan Sewall as advocate-general for the Crown.

John Adams first move was to push for a trial by jury, and in this he nearly succeeded. Adams based his argument on a 1717 Parliamentary statute stating that persons accused under the act of 1700 "may be tried and judged" according to the original statute of Henry VIII which had created this special court for sea crimes. That statute called for trial by jury. Bernard and the rest of the court had accepted this and were making plans for calling a jury when Chief Justice Hutchinson, who had been ruminating on the matter, countered with an argument
of his own. All of the statutes, according to Hutchinson, referred only to English juries. Furthermore, he pointed out, the word "may" in the 1717 statute could as easily be interpreted to mean permitting but not requiring a trial by jury, as to mean "shall" as held by Adams. Accepting Hutchinson's reasoning, the court set aside the idea of calling a jury. This pre-trial maneuvering took place in May; the court then adjourned until June 14 to take up the actual case. John Wentworth and his retinue arrived in town on Tuesday, the thirteenth, and the trial started promptly the next day.42

With soldiers in their streets and warships in their harbor, it is not surprising that the people of Boston showed a zealous interest in a trial stemming from an incident of apparent British military provocation. The court room was packed with onlookers. The telling question to be determined was the intent of Lieutenant Panton and his boarding party. The prosecution, hoping to prove that the sailors had nothing to fear from Panton and thus were guilty of murder, attempted to show that the boarders were acting only as customs officers searching for illegal goods. On the other side John Adams mounted evidence that Panton was in fact attempting to impress Michael Corbet and his three compatriots. If this was so, Adams argued, the men had a right to protect their freedom by resisting, even to the point of taking another man's life if necessary. They had that right, the lawyer stated, whether impressment was legal or not. But to seal his case for acquittal of the sailors, he was prepared to prove that the impressment mission of HMS Rose was a violation of the law.
John Adams owned a complete set of the British Statutes at Large, the only such in all the colonies he believed. In one of those volumes, lying on the table in front of him in the court room, was a Parliamentary statute of Queen Anne forbidding impressment in American waters. As he began to make his argument, however, his earlier nemesis, Thomas Hutchinson, abruptly interrupted and moved for adjournment to the following day, June 17. Hutchinson, Wentworth, Bernard, and the other commissioners filed out of the room and remained out until one o'clock the next afternoon. At that time they returned and, to the anxious prisoners and audience, Bernard read the verdict; acquittal on the basis of justifiable homicide. No further reason for the decision was given. Hutchinson later wrote that it was because no special authorization for impressment had been granted from the Admiralty. Adams believed that Hutchinson's hasty move to cut off his argument and the trial's favorable result stemmed from a determination by the Chief Justice and the other judges, who included Commodore Hood, not to publicize the question of the legality of impressment until they could get the non-impressment statute of Queen Anne repealed. Whatever the mixture of reasons for the decision, one overriding consideration could not have helped but influence Bernard, Hutchinson, and the other commissioners. A vote to convict might easily be the spark to ignite a highly volatile political situation.

What the commissioners discussed as they came to their verdict can only be conjectured. As the immediate crisis was affecting Massachusetts and not his own colony, John Wentworth
doubtless listened, asked some questions, and willingly adhered to the decision of those most closely involved. One thing is sure; in this short time John was made aware of the pressure that Bernard, Hutchinson, and other royal officials in Massachusetts were operating under. New Hampshire, though not many miles distant, existed in a vastly different political climate. John now saw and heard for himself just how critical the situation was in Boston. And he was exposed not just to the Crown viewpoint, for he must also have talked with John Adams. Fourteen years had passed since the two good friends had graduated from Harvard and there was much to discuss—old acquaintances, activities, accomplishments, possibly most of all, recent events. As they conversed it must have become painfully apparent that occurrences beyond their personal control were driving them to opposite sides of a political barrier that both wished was not there. As a royal governor, John Wentworth was bound to uphold the decisions of the British Government whether he agreed with them or not. His friend, now one of the most prominent attorneys in Massachusetts and an ardent student of English law, felt compelled to oppose the recent acts of Parliament which he believed violated the constitutional principles he had so painstakingly learned. Wentworth may not have agreed with John Adams' interpretation of the developments taking place in England and the colonies, but he would not have doubted his friend's sincerity of belief. Adams had a first rate mind and on all sides he was considered a man of learning and reason. John Wentworth no doubt came away from this meeting
with a broader perspective on the conflict between England and the colonies.

Although John did not particularly like Francis Bernard, he would never have done anything to undermine the authority of another royal governor. Nevertheless, during his sojourn in Boston he was unwittingly used by Bernard's opponents in their continuing propaganda war against the Massachusetts Governor. On Thursday, June 22, John was invited to an elegant dinner held in his honor in Cambridge at the home of William Brattle, a member of the Massachusetts Council. There he was greeted by other members of the Council and various professors and tutors from Harvard College. From Brattle's house the whole group trooped over to the college, ostensibly for a tour of the new library built by subscriptions raised since the old building and its books had been destroyed by fire in 1764. The fact that the Massachusetts House was meeting at that time in the chapel of Harvard Hall certainly was no coincidence. On his arrival, John was waited on by a committee of the Assembly headed by James Otis who expressed the wish of the individual members that they might have the honor of personally meeting the Governor of New Hampshire. Wentworth do doubt felt honored at this request, and for the next two hours he shook hands and chatted with the Massachusetts representatives as Thomas Cushing, the Speaker of the House, introduced them in small groups. When the last greeting had finally been made John did get his tour of the library, and Professor John Winthrop even performed some experiments for his former student.
As he rode back into Boston that evening in his coach, John Wentworth must have had a good feeling about the day's events, and possibly wondered how such a rift could have developed between the Council and Assembly on the one hand, and the Governor and other royal officials on the other. He may even have wondered if the situation in Massachusetts need have deteriorated to its present state had he been governor. Bernard, however, on hearing of the activities in Cambridge, no doubt saw the affair as only another incident in the whigs' well planned campaign to discredit him. The newspapers of the following week bore testimony to that opinion. The radical Boston Gazette, in reporting the event, noted that "Mr. Wentworth, like a Governor, and like the Representative of the greatest and best of Kings, . . . is much respected by all Ranks, and caressed by those who his affairs will admit to the Honour of his Company." Here were Bernard's antagonists, holding up a royal governor for praise, showing that their opposition was not to royal authority or to the Crown, only to individuals who abused their power. The comparison to be drawn was obvious. The Evening Post was even more direct. The courtesy and respect shown to Governor Wentworth in Cambridge, it concluded, proved that "however the People of this Province may have been represented, as inimical to any who may chance to wear his Majesty's Commission, the World in this instance, may be clearly convinced that the Spirit of Disgust, arises not from the Commission with which our most gracious Sovereign thinks fit to honor any of his Subjects, but from a dislike to those whose Deportment is unworthy the Royal Favour." It is possible
that John Wentworth was gaining a reputation among the opponents of royal government in Massachusetts as the kind of royal governor they would like to see in office. After all, there has been little disturbance in New Hampshire and no complaints against the governor. And too, it was easy to bestow praise on a governor from another province who posed no threat. But the situation in Massachusetts was far different and more complex than that of its neighbor to the north, a fact that was easily recognizable. It is more likely that the Massachusetts Council and Assembly went out of their way to pay respect to John Wentworth as a highly public dramatization of the point they wanted most to make: that they were loyal subjects of the Crown and only opposed royal officials who threatened their basic liberties, namely Francis Bernard.

As John headed for home at the end of June, he certainly had a better perspective on the situation in Boston. As a result of his visit he probably viewed the prospects for peace in Massachusetts and the rest of the colonies with mixed feelings. The sailors' case had been resolved without causing any further trouble, and the Massachusetts legislators, at least in their dealings with him, had appeared sensible, moderate men with a healthy respect for the authority of the Crown. At the same time, his conversations with Bernard, Hutchinson, and other royal officials on the one hand, and with John Adams on the other, had doubtless made him aware that what had started out as a difference of opinion over the British revenue acts, was hardening into principle. But he had no control over Massachusetts. His concern was with New Hampshire
and at the moment the outlook was optimistic. He thus could turn his attention to matters other than his colony's relations with Britain.

The acts passed by the last Assembly, including the one dividing the province into counties, had still to be submitted to England for approval. With that task completed, Wentworth turned to his responsibilities as Surveyor General of the woods. In late July he boarded the sloop Beaver, put at his disposal by Commodore Hood, and sailed east from Portsmouth to inspect timber lands in Maine and Nova Scotia. The fact that his father had recently been replaced as mast agent in America, due to a change in contractors in England, did not dampen Wentworth's enthusiasm for enforcing the timber laws. This was important to him not only for saving valuable masts for the Royal Navy, but because he tended to see this lawlessness on the frontier as part of the general breakdown of respect for authority in the colonies. Moreover, as Surveyor General this was a problem that he had some control over.

As early as April Wentworth had been made aware of large scale violations of the woods in the vicinity of Brunswick in Maine and he had vowed, if need be, to put a stop to it himself. He was now on his way to do that. The second day out of Portsmouth he reached the Androscoggin River and the site of the saw mills that were cutting up the illegally felled logs. The Governor quickly notified the people of his identity and his business there and requested as many of them as possible, with a Justice of the Peace, to meet him at the mills. When they had arrived, John read them the act of Parliament reserving
the pines for the British Navy. He made a special effort to impress on these country people the strength of the law and the serious consequences of breaking it. To emphasize the power of Parliamentary law Wentworth went unarmed and ordered his deputy, another aide, and the boatmen who rowed them to the mills to do likewise.

When he had finished, an older man stepped forward and, speaking for the rest, said that the people were poor and depended on the timber for their living. They had assumed that since it was on their land it belonged to them. They now, however, could see their error; they would not oppose Wentworth in his duty and would protect him as long as he was there. Then, in John's words, he "singled out one man who had been the most zealous and warm in the scheme of making their Country too hot for Officers . . . and required him to aid and carry me off in his canoe upon the River . . . and there help me seize and mark about 500 logs which belonged to him and the rest who waited on the Banks of the River within 30 yds, which he directly performed." The local magistrate was then put in charge of the logs and Wentworth and his men stayed overnight at the local inn to consider any claims people wanted to make against the seized timber the next day. No claims were made and the inhabitants reaffirmed their vow to adhere to the law.47

How long they held to this is a matter of conjecture. These rough folk on the Androscoggin River undoubtedly were startled when a royal governor suddenly appeared in their midst reading to them from the statutes of Parliament. They probably had known they were doing something wrong, but nothing serious
enough to provoke a visit by such an important official. This undoubtedly made an impression on them, along with John Wentworth's sincerity and the forthright manner in which he conducted himself. For a time the woodsmen may have been cowed by this event and by the fear that the Surveyor General and his party would momentarily return. But as the memory faded, it no doubt was replaced by a vision of the profits that could be had from the tall pines. The law may have seemed awesome to these people as John Wentworth read it to them, but on extended consideration it probably seemed unjust that they were prevented from cutting trees on their own land, trees that they considered theirs and that the Government might never make use of. The moratorium on cutting was bound to be only temporary.

Wentworth realized this and the fact that the wooded areas of New England were too vast for him and his four deputies to effectively patrol. To facilitate his enforcement of the forest laws he requested detachment of a small schooner from the British fleet, with from fourteen to twenty men, to carry the inspectors along the coast and up the rivers where the illegal logging operations were prevalent. This never materialized, but he continued to press for funds to pay badly needed additional deputies. Yet John knew these were only makeshift measures made necessary by an unrealistic policy laid down by Parliament in the 1720's that forbade the cutting of any white pine trees not within a township or on private land granted before 1691.48 In a frontier area such as Maine, nearly all the pines were covered by this law. This made it difficult to clear and cultivate land, and declared illegal the use of much
timber from settlers' own property that was valuable to them but worthless to the Navy. The law clearly was inequitable, and it was unrealistic to think that people would not break it.

As John sailed on east to Nova Scotia where he reserved a 200,000 acre tract of pitch, Norway, and white pine for the Navy, he likely was considering and reconsidering various alternatives to Britain's present timber policy in America. In fact it would not be long before he was provided added impetus to formulate a viable plan of his own. In October he was threatened with court action by a group of wealthy Massachusetts landowners who claimed that mastcutters, with authorization from Wentworth, were infringing on their private property rights by taking trees in a large tract of land along the Kennebec River. Wentworth believed that under existing law the trees belonged to the Crown and to prove it he initiated action himself in the admiralty court. The case was eventually decided in favor of the Kennebec proprietors on the basis of ownership of the land prior to 1691, but before it was over John had devised and proposed to the Assembly new timber regulations that he felt would be more beneficial to all parts of the British Empire. Instead of a blanket reservation of white pines or setting aside several large tracts of woods such as that in Nova Scotia, Wentworth called for a small reservation of forest lands in each new town granted, and inducements for individuals to preserve for the Crown the best trees on their own land. This plan showed wisdom for it would save the best trees for masts, make them less isolated and thus easier to get out, and allow settlers the use of the timber
growing on their own property. Nevertheless, there was no
guarantee that his ideas would be accepted and until any changes
were made, John Wentworth, as in all cases involving royal
authority, was dedicated to upholding existing law. To this
purpose he felt his trip to Maine and Nova Scotia had been a
success. With eight days sailing from Halifax, he was back in
New Hampshire before the first of September.49

On his return, Wentworth found two disconcerting letters
waiting for him, one from Hillsborough and one from Rockingham.
Both involved criticism from Whitehall, and in particular, by
the American Secretary. Hillsborough's letter, dated July 15,
was in reaction to the New Hampshire Governor's attempt to ease
his province's currency problems. An act of Assembly setting
the value of silver and gold coins circulating in the province
had been disallowed in England as contradicting a similar act
of Parliament, devised by Sir Isaac Newton and passed in 1704
during the reign of Queen Anne. On learning of the action taken
by the home government, the Assembly complained that the
Parliamentary Act did not cover the coins that were known in
New Hampshire, many of which were Spanish and Portuguese in
origin, and thus was useless in the colony. Monetary transac-
tions were in confusion because no one knew what money was worth.
In the spring of 1769, this was another matter that the House
had demanded would have to be cleared up before a supply bill
could be granted. As a temporary expedient, until a more
permanent answer could be found, Wentworth had agreed to issue
a proclamation setting the value of these foreign coins in
English shillings. He signed the proclamation in March and in May informed the Secretary of State of his action.  

As John Wentworth read Hillsborough's July letter there was no mistaking the Secretary's opinion of the proclamation. It was, he informed the Governor, "a matter of as much consequence as has come before me, not only since I have been Secretary of State, but since my first coming to the Board of Trade." Hillsborough saw the proclamation as a clear contravention of the act of Parliament of 1704 and, as he told Wentworth, it was not justified "by your Instructions as Governor, by the Arguments you make use of in your Letter, or by the Interests of the Colony." He was referring the matter to the Privy Council.  

Wentworth was obviously upset by Hillsborough's letter. He had gone to great lengths to preserve peace in his colony, and he hoped his efforts would stand him in good stead with the British Government. The relative tranquility in New Hampshire had been commented on favorably, but now he found himself in trouble anyway, merely, he believed, for doing something that was good for the colony and that in no way could be of harm to England. Possibly worse than his own immediate trouble with England, was the added difficulty this might give him in keeping the peace at home. To many, this could give validity to the cries of arbitrary and unjust authority that were continuously repeated in neighboring Massachusetts. With great reserve Wentworth wrote Hillsborough that everyone had agreed the proclamation was "the only prudent expedient that cou'd preserve the Province from immediate dissolution." The
disallowance of recent acts of Assembly, he went on as a way of warning, had already "exceedingly alarmed the minds of the People" and made them more susceptible to arguments being raised against government.\textsuperscript{52}

In a letter written to Rockingham on the same day, John was more open about his frustration. Other provinces had passed acts identical to New Hampshire's, he told the Marquis, yet none of them had been disallowed. The rejection of this act had left the people of the province not knowing the equivalents of shillings, pounds, or pence. Taxes could not be collected, thus the supply could not be granted. Because Whitehall had not provided "the lest instruction, what to Substitute in lieu of money," John explained, the only alternative to complete chaos was the proclamation. "The Country already inflamed almost beyond human power to restrain," he continued, "It surely was my duty to embrace the only method that cou'd preserve the King's province from direct Ruin—which has kept all things just as they were. Our Judges have no Salaries and wou'd have resign'd directly, neither would have any others taken their Seats in such a circumstance. Creditors wou'd have been ruin'd and Debtors skreen'd from justice. This is absolutely the Fact; And whatever may be its other consequences, I rejoice that it has accomplish'd the preservation of a good Province from confusion, bloodshed and total destruction. I can therefore so far join with his Lordship \textit{Hillsborough} in its being a matter of importance That I verily think That I shou'd have richly deserv'd to have lost my head, had I not
prevented the threatened evils by this the only possible means that was left to me."

The Governor allowed his resentment and indignation even freer rein in a letter to Paul Wentworth. He was incredulous that New Hampshire, among the most obedient of provinces, should be "the first to feel the hand of ministerial Resentment." If the objections were voiced by the government to measures such as his proclamation, there was no telling what kind of opposition Britain would arouse against its policies in the colonies. "Good God," John exclaimed to his relative, "what Governor will not rather throw this Province into Confusion rather than risque any Measure not verbatim instructed. I believe it would cost Government more than 6000 Guineas p an\textsuperscript{M} not very importantly employed if we take all as it is literally written." Hillsborough's criticism he found "ludicrous."

As if this were not enough to spoil the Governor's return from his profitable trip into the woods, a second letter awaiting him from Rockingham contained a reminder of another instance of Hillsborough's displeasure with his conduct. This concerned an admiralty case involving John's uncle, Daniel Rindge. In May, 1767, one of Rindge's ships, purportedly on a trading voyage to Newfoundland, was forced by bad weather into the harbor of the French island of Micquelon. Detected by the British Navy, the ship was seized and condemned without trial in a court of admiralty. Rindge believed he had been treated unjustly and sent a memorial for redress of his grievance to agent Trescothick for presentation in England. In October, 1767,
he also sent a petition to the Governor and to his fellow members of the Council seeking support for his claim.\textsuperscript{54}

John Wentworth took an active interest in the case. While it was still under consideration by the admiralty court he wrote to the judge in support of his uncle. The following spring, 1768, in his report to the Secretary of State, John enclosed Rindge's petition to the Governor and Council and offered his opinion of the proceedings against the Portsmouth merchant. It was apparent, he urged, that Rindge was innocent because the goods carried by his ship were the same as those used by the people on the French island for payment in trade. The people of Micquelon would not want the same items coming in that were going out. John felt it was unfortunate that the proof for Rindge's innocence had not been considered in the trial, especially since the ramifications of the decision went beyond just one merchant. As he explained to the Secretary, the case "has alarm'd the Trade here with unusual apprehensions for the Safety of all their foreign Navigation, which is their Dependence." This kind of arbitrary and unjustified action would hurt fair trade, slow the demand for British goods, and diminish respect for the trade laws. It was particularly unfortunate that it happened to a New Hampshire merchant, Wentworth pointed out, because there had been no opposition in the province to the regulation of trade and because it was especially important at this time for prudence to prevail in the relations between the colonies and England.\textsuperscript{55}

A year later, in March 1769, Hillsborough wrote back that, as far as he could see, the case had been properly
prosecuted and any appeal should have gone to the admiralty
court. Further, he felt the Council had overstepped its
jurisdiction in giving an opinion on the verdict. Now, in
September, John had news from Rockingham that Hillsborough was
irritated that he had involved himself in the case at all.
Indicating sympathy with Wentworth's position, the Marquis
offered some advice. "Tho' I know you would not brook any
little sharpness, if any there should be," he wrote, "Let
your Answer be quite Calm." The Governor should explain,
continued Rockingham, that he had felt it "a point of duty to
send any information which might be of use and which might point
out any real hardship under which anyone in Nor\th America
might labour." In fact, this was what Wentworth had thought
he was doing and he did not understand this criticism from
Hillsborough. He had been especially careful, he wrote back
to Rockingham, not to comment on the merits of the case but
only to point out how it might affect the province in a general
way. The mild appeal for redress and the concurrence in it by
the Governor and Council had, he claimed, headed off trouble
for the English Government. He explained that handling the
matter in this way "prevented an universal petition from all
the Continent against all Courts of Admiralty and a positive
determination not to appear at or be impleaded in them." Other-
wise, the Rindge case "wou'd have been the wish'd for instance
on which to ground their utter refusal of Admiralty Jurisdiction
in America." "I was much surprised," John went on, "that this
part of my duty had not given satisfaction." Hillsborough's
entire "manner," he wrote with discouragement, "almost precludes me any use in answering."56

These two instances of chastisement by the home government, for his proclamation setting the value of coins in New Hampshire and for his interest in Daniel Rindge's admiralty case, were frustrating and disheartening for John Wentworth. He was doing his best to keep a difficult situation under control in the interests of royal authority, yet the British Ministry seemed set on undermining all of his efforts. Rejection of the coin proclamation would add burdens to New Hampshire's already difficult financial situation, cause resentment of British colonial policy, and make John's task of preventing disorder in these tenuous times more difficult. The kind of arbitrary and unjust decision involved in the Rindge case served as a hindrance instead of a help to trade and the mercantile system. And Hillsborough's reaction was yet another example of the Ministerial insensitivity that was promoting obstruction of British policy rather than attempting to facilitate its acceptance. This was exactly the opposite of what John had hoped for when he left England. Key elements in his vision of a successful system of empire were an enlightened administration at home and strong, knowledgeable governors in the colonies with enough independence to do what was necessary to insure the workability of Britain's colonial policy. Unfortunately, from John Wentworth's point of view, the present ministers were not farsighted enough to let governors take needed steps for restoring faith and tranquility in the provinces. Instead, with its arbitrary, uninformed pronouncements, Whitehall was
defeating its own purposes and putting the colonial governor in an extremely difficult position. It is not surprising that John Wentworth, in the fall of 1769, was especially desirous that the Rockingham Whigs should be back in power in Westminster.57

The Customs Board in Boston had foolishly provoked trouble for itself, for other royal officials, and for British policy in general. Now the ministers in London were exhibiting a similar lack of wisdom. These developments undoubtedly had much to do with John's deepening pessimism about the prospects for improved relations between the colonies and Great Britain. He may also have been reflecting on the strong convictions he had heard on both sides of the dispute in Boston in June, when he wrote to Rockingham in September that though the trouble in the colonies was "first impell'd by vexation and passion into Excess, it now seems subsiding into principle and System, infinitely more likely to get rooted than all the former Noise and Clamor." He wished, he told the Marquis, that he could believe that conditions in the colonies were returning to their previous state. But he could not. If something were not done soon to allay colonial "apprehensions and jealousies," he warned, the American colonies would "be forever the cause of difficulty and trouble to Great Britain."58

To be forced to this conclusion must have been especially discouraging for Wentworth because he had done so much himself to bolster royal authority in America. His greatest accomplishment lay in preventing any open protest from his province against the trade laws, but his efforts had not ended there. The energies he expended tramping the woods were not solely
for the practical purpose of preserving masts for the Navy. Just as important and, in John's mind, related to the overall problem of respect for royal government in America, was the need to demonstrate the strength and immediacy of Parliamentary law. Although he was not in favor of the British troops in Boston, he willingly cooperated with General Gage when called upon. On hearing in March that some of Gage's men had deserted and were being concealed in the vicinity of Londonderry, New Hampshire, the Governor issued a proclamation against harboring such soldiers. And at this very time he was devising a plan to advance the Anglican Church in New Hampshire, a development he strongly believed would do much to promote close ties between the people of his province and the mother country, and encourage reverence for British authority in general.

The Anglican Church owed its beginnings in New Hampshire to the efforts of Benning Wentworth and his friends who, in the 1730's, were looking for a means of political leverage that would be of use in England against the designs of Massachusetts. The Portsmouth Parish was founded then and, after becoming Governor, Benning continued his support by setting aside one lot in every township he granted for the use of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the missionary arm of the Church of England. The Church had not taken advantage of this, however, and no new parishes were established during his term. John Wentworth now wanted to build on his uncle's groundwork and spread the Church, for he saw Anglicanism as a potentially important ally within his own province.
Wentworth had a definite plan in mind which he disclosed to Joseph Harrison in late September, 1769. He wanted to see one Anglican minister established each year in New Hampshire. The method would be for the SPG to place several missionaries in towns at fifty pounds a year each. With the ministers living and working on the Society's reserved lots in the towns, the property would increase rapidly in value and soon be capable of providing support for more missionaries, each of whom would repeat the process. In this way the Church could be expanded dramatically with little initial investment. Wentworth envisioned forty new parishes within the first ten years. Now was the time to start, he told Harrison, for schism was fracturing all churches in the province, and the Anglicans could take advantage of the situation by serving the many settlers in new towns who were eager for religion but too poor to support it. John hoped to begin by having a chaplain appointed to himself who would form a parish in Wolfeboro and neighboring towns.

John Wentworth realized that the expansion of the Church of England was a sensitive issue in all of the colonies including New Hampshire. It had become especially so as resentment grew against British policy in America. He thus warned that his program would have to be implemented slowly, the new missionaries not to make open attempts to proselytize. He stressed that the greatest "Caution, Prudence, and Secrecy" would have to be exercised in order not to provoke a negative reaction. Certainly there were risks involved, but there was no question for Wentworth that they were worth taking. Not only would the Anglican Church be given a great boost in New
Hampshire by this plan but, probably most important during these difficult times, the Governor saw it as a significant aid in securing and spreading allegiance to royal authority. Religion, he explained to Harrison, "is part of a Man's political Character," and a more vigorous Anglican establishment in New Hampshire, he believed, "wou'd produce very desirable effects in the Administration of civil Government."^61

Joseph Harrison, a beaten man by this time, was leaving America for England. John Wentworth was providing him this information so that it would be carried to the Bishop of London. "I cordially venerate the Church of England," he told Harrison, "and hope to see it universal in this Province." The following spring he repeated and expanded on his program in a letter to the Bishop of London himself. Unfortunately for John, little came of the plan. During his years as Governor, only one additional parish was established in New Hampshire, that at Claremont on the Connecticut River by SPG missionary, Ranna Cossit. One itinerant minister was also sent, but he proved inadequate to the job. Even the Portsmouth Church found itself in trouble. Following the death of the Reverend Arthur Browne in 1773, the church wardens and even Wentworth himself encountered great difficulty in getting support from the Society for another clergyman to take his place.^^62

The SPG was guarding its resources closely and apparently did not feel that the expenditure of funds that would be required by Governor Wentworth's program could be justified in one small province such as New Hampshire. The major reason, though, that the SPG did not follow up on Wentworth's
plan to promote the Church was the uncertain political situation in the colonies. The activities of the Society in America were slowed significantly during this period from Whitehall's reluctance to approve anything that might further antagonize the colonists. Another reason for the Society's niggardliness with New Hampshire may have lain in the failure of Barlow Trecothick to lobby for Wentworth, as the Governor had wished, at SPG headquarters in London. In the long run it may have been just as well for Wentworth because the Congregationalists, who made up the vast majority of the inhabitants of the province, became apprehensive about the little progress that was made by the Church of England. Greater success in Anglican expansion might, in contrast to John Wentworth's belief, have adversely affected his political position in the province, especially had his detailed instigation of it ever been discovered. This was one development, however, that he never had to worry about.

The criticism from Hillsborough awaiting John on his return from the forest had depressed him and seemed to magnify the problems between the colonies and England. In fact, in the fall of 1769 tension did remain high in many of the colonies, especially in Massachusetts where resentment of the British soldiers stationed in Boston grew daily. Conditions in New Hampshire, though, returned to nearly normal allowing Wentworth to turn his attention to matters other than politics. During the first week in November he sat for John Singleton Copley who came to Portsmouth to paint his portrait. As with the one done in London for Rockingham, this likeness too was intended for a close friend in England, Paul Wentworth. A few days
later occurred the most notable event in New Hampshire that Autumn, a very personal one for the Governor. At the age of thirty-two he was married.

John Wentworth's marriage was made possible by the death, on October 28, of Theodore Atkinson, Jr. Atkinson, a member of the Council and since March successor to his aging father as Secretary of the Province, died after a long battle with tuberculosis, the same disease that had claimed John Wentworth's brother the previous year. His passing was thus no surprise. What must have been a shock, at least to some people, was the marriage of his widow, Frances, to the Governor of the province on November 11, just ten days after her husband was buried. Frances Wentworth Atkinson, John's cousin, was only twenty-three at the time although she had been married since she was sixteen. John had known her since his college days when he visited his uncle Samuel Wentworth's house in Boston and she was only a child. A story has long existed that the two carried on a romance behind her husband's back. This may be true, but by itself does not account for such a hasty wedding, an obvious breach of social decorum.

John later felt compelled to explain the circumstances in a long, defensive letter to Rockingham. Although he had proposed waiting, he told his patron, the marriage took place soon after the funeral on the insistence of his parents who had long desired that he be married, and old Benning Wentworth who, before he died, wished to see his nephew take a wife. Even Colonel Atkinson, who was relieved that his son was out of his misery and loved Frances like a daughter, gave the match
his blessing and wished the ceremony to take place as soon as possible. John's aunt, Mrs. Atkinson, was equally in agreement, John claimed, because she herself felt she had not long to live. This account might have some validity, but a simpler, more accurate assessment of the circumstances within which the wedding took place probably can be found in another event—the birth of a son to John and Frances Wentworth less than seven months later. The child apparently did not live long for no further mention of him can be found. Nevertheless, that he was given a name, John, and was baptized, seems to belie John's attempt to dismiss the birth as a miscarriage "Sustain'd from Mrs. Wentworth's being frighted by an attack of a large dog."67

Whatever the circumstances, the wedding was a gala affair. It was performed by the Reverend Arthur Browne on the morning of Saturday, November 11, "before thousands," as John later remembered. The Governor was dressed in white silk stocking breeches, white coat, and blue silk waistcoat, all accented with gold buttons and lace. The attire of his bride must have contrasted sharply with the mourning she had worn in Queen's Chapel only days before. Ships flew their flags in the harbor, the cannon were fired, and all the town bells were rung. Everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion and if there was any impropriety here, no one seemed to care.68

As winter set in, time passed uneventfully, doubtless to John's relief. In a February letter to Hillsborough he reported that the "quiet peaceable and orderly State of the Province" left "Nothing of Importance to communicate." A highly
visible sign of the tranquility that prevailed in Portsmouth through the winter of 1769-70, was the frigate, *HMS Beaver*, anchored in the harbor. Relations between her captain and crew and the townspeople remained exceedingly cordial. Early in January Speaker Gilman laid before the Assembly a set of resolves communicated by the Virginia Burgesses denouncing as unconstitutional a Parliamentary proposal to have persons accused of treason in the colonies transferred to England for trial. The New Hampshire Assembly took no further note of the resolutions before it adjourned at the end of the month. Neither was any heed being paid to the non-importation agreements. John Wentworth happily told the Colonial Secretary that "Some Scott Merchants have to import their European Goods hither where they sell without the least Molestation." There was little sentiment of defiance in New Hampshire. This mood of accommodation could only have been encouraged by a circular letter from the Colonial Secretary to John Wentworth and his fellow governors. In his message, the Earl of Hillsborough announced that the Ministry, at the next session of Parliament, intended to propose the removal of all of the Townshend duties except the one on tea. 69

Whatever the reasons, John doubtless was thankful for the peace in his province. It not only gave him hope for the future, but also time to consider what he had accomplished in his nearly three years as Governor. Great strides had been made toward his goal of improving New Hampshire internally and making it a productive part of the British Empire. His other aim and by this time his primary concern, that of keeping New Hampshire quiet and loyal, had been more difficult, largely because much
of the situation was beyond his control. Nevertheless, he had expended all his efforts and here too had been successful. No non-importation movement had taken hold in New Hampshire and he had prevented any open protestation to the Crown against the revenue acts. In late 1769 he despaired for the colonial situation as a whole due to the intemperance of radicals in the colonies, mainly in Massachusetts, on the one hand, and the lack of prudence and foresight exhibited on the other by not only the Customs Commissioners in Boston, but the Ministry at Whitehall. By early 1770, however, there was increased reason for optimism. Perhaps the news of imminent repeal of most of the Townshend duties would cool colonial tempers and bring a return to reason and good will. Moreover, for beleaguered royal officials in the colonies such as John Wentworth, this development provided evidence for renewed faith in the wisdom and motives of those men who were running the British Government.
NOTES

CHAPTER VII

1 Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, June 17, 1767, to Thomas Bell, June 30, 1767, and to Major Robert Bayard, Oct. 19, 1767, Transcripts of John Wentworth Letter Book no. 1, New Hampshire Archives, 2, 5-6, 46-47.


3 Wentworth to Peter Randolph, July 10, 1767, to Governor Bernard, July 7, 1767, to James Harbard, July 10, 1767, to Joshua Loring, July 14, 1767, to John Hill, July 25, 1767, to William Parker, July 27, 1767, to Jonathan Sewell, Aug. 19, 1767, to the Navy, Treasury, Admiralty, Board of Trade, and the Earl of Shelburne, Sept. 3, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 10-11, 7, 12, 13-14, 21-22, 24, 31-32, 53-57. For additional evidence of Wentworth's energetic activities to enforce royal forest policy during the early months of his administration see Ibid., 7-39, passim.


6 Wentworth to the Board of Trade, June 23, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 3-4; Ms. Biography of Josiah Bartlett by his son Levi Bartlett, Josiah Bartlett Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, fol. 1, 27-29. Thomas Westbrook Waldron in the years to come became one of John's close friends and confidants.

7 Wentworth to the Board of Trade, September 30, 1767, Hammond Transcripts, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, fol. 6; Wentworth to Stephen Apthorp, Aug. 18, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 28. See also Wentworth to William Parker, Aug. 26, 1767, and to Richard Willis, Aug. 18, 1767, Ibid., 32, 29.

The preamble to the Townshend Act is quoted on ll.

Townshend never knew the full extent of the opposition to his bills for he died in September, 1767, at the relatively young age of forty-two. Not universally admired, he was respected by most, including Edmund Burke, who stated of him: "Perhaps there never arose in this country, nor in any country, a man of more pointed and finished wit; and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgment." Ibid., 104, 116. Burke is quoted on 104.

Burke is quoted on 104.

Wentworth to Peter Gilman, Nov. 25, 1767, Letter Book no. 1, 57-58.


Wentworth to the Earl of Shelburne, March 25, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6, box 2, fol. 6; Wentworth to Rockingham, May 6, 1768, Wentworth-Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield Central Library, R1-1047.

Wentworth to Commissioners of the Customs, June 16, 1768, and Commissioners of the Customs to Wentworth, June 18, 1768, Public Record: Office, C.0.5/945. For an excellent description of John Temple and his activities see Charles W. Akers, "New Hampshire's 'Honorary' Lieutenant Governor: John Temple and the American Revolution," Historical New Hampshire, 30(Summer, 1975), 79-99.

20. Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, June 25, 1768, PRO, C.0.5/935; *Journal of the House of Representatives . . . of Massachusetts Bay*, May 25–June 30, Appendix H.


28. The Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, Aug. 13, 1768, PRO, C.0.5/935.

29. Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Nov. 7, 1768, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 6; *NHSP*, 7:248-49.

Another reason for the Assembly's seeming acquiescence in the suppression of the petition may have lain in the fact that many House members were proprietors of land west of the Connecticut River, an area they hoped could be recovered from New York jurisdiction through the good offices of the Governor. It was at this very time, in late fall, 1768, that New Hampshire's interest in this region was rekindled. (See Jere R. Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism: New Hampshire Politics and the American Revolution, 1741-1794 (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 71; John F. Looney, "The King's Representative: Benning Wentworth, Colonial Governor, 1741-1767" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1961); and NHSP, 10:215-17, and 18:587-88.)


33 Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism, 40-41; The Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, Nov. 15, 1768, PRO, C.O. 5/935; Wentworth to Hillsborough, May 2, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 230-31. Wentworth's statement to Nathaniel Rogers that Trecothick refused to serve "unless with a Colleague," seems to have been either merely an assumption on his part or an excuse for proposing Paul Wentworth as co-agent. See Wentworth to Nathaniel Rogers, December 19, 1768, Ibid., 169-71.


35 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Feb. 16, 1769, WM, R1-1159; Wentworth to Paul Wentworth, Sept. 17, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 275.

36 Belknap, New Hampshire, 2:11; NHSP, 7:222-26, 229. See also note 2 above. John later told Hillsborough that the Assembly had agreed to leave open the question of payment for Rindge. There is no evidence for this, or that the Assembly reconsidered its negative vote. See Wentworth to Hillsborough, July 3, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 251.

37 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, May 1, 1769, PRO, C.O.5/930.


39 Ibid., 424.

40 Oliver M. Dickerson, Boston under Military Rule, 1768-1769 (Westport, Conn., 1971), 104; Zobel, Boston Massacre, 109-11.

41 Quoted in Zobel, Boston Massacre, 122-23.

42 Dickerson, Military Rule, 110.


Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, July 3, 1769, PRO, C.0.5/930; Wentworth to Hillsborough, Oct. 22, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/227; Wentworth to John Henniker, Jan. 12, 1769, and to Messrs. Trecothick and Apthorp, Apr. 10, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 178-79 and 216-17.

Wentworth to Judge Auchmuty, Apr. 10, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 215-16.

Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Oct. 22, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/227.


Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Oct. 22, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/227; Wentworth to Rockingham, Sept. 17, 1769, WWM, R127-6. On the case involving the Kennebec proprietors see Gordon E. Kershaw, "John Wentworth vs. Kennebeck Proprietors: The Formation of Royal Mast Policy 1769-1778," The American Neptune, 33(1973): 95-119. John Wentworth seems to have first set forth his plan for reserving forest lots in new townships on January 13, 1773, when he wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty and the Treasury (Letter Book no. 2, 41-47). This was not accomplished while he was Governor, but he remained a proponent of the plan even after he had been forced by the outbreak of war to leave America. His fullest elaboration of it came in 1778 on consideration of a possible Loyalist colony in Maine. See Wentworth to George Germain, Oct. 12, 1778, PRO, C.0.5/175.

Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, May 1, 1769, Hammond Transcripts, box 1, fol. 7, and PRO, C.0.5/930.

The Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, July 15, 1769, PRO, C.0.5/936.

Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Sept. 17, 1769, PRO, C.0.5/936.

John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Sept. 17, 1769, WWM, R127-6.


57 Wentworth to Paul Wentworth, Sept. 17, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 274-75.

58 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Sept. 17, 1769, WWM, R127-6.

59 NHSP, 18:589-90.


61 Wentworth to Joseph Harrison, Sept. 24, 1769, Fulham Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, 6:106-107. Politics may have been the only reason behind Wentworth's interest in the Anglican Church. At one time he told Daniel Rindge, "My heart knows no difference in Modes of Religion (save against those that are destructive to our civil rights and contrary to law)." See Wentworth to Rindge, Nov. 29, 1765, Masonian Papers, 3:36.

62 D. H. Watson, "Barlow Trecothick and other Associates of Lord Rockingham During the Stamp Act Crisis, 1765-1766" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Sheffield University, 1958), 124; Wentworth to Joseph Harrison, Sept. 24, 1769, Fulham Papers, 6:106-107; Wentworth to the Bishop of London, Apr. 28, 1770, The Papers of Eleazar Wheelock, Dartmouth College Archives, 770278.1; Belknap, New Hampshire, 1:324n; Moses Badger to SPG,
Dec. 17, 1769, SPG Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, 99; Wentworth to SPG, July 5, 1773, and May 6, 1774, SPG Papers, 126-27, 139-41; Wardens of Queens Chapel, Portsmouth, to SPG, July 2, 1773, SPG Papers, 124. Ranna Cossit was very supportive of Wentworth's plan and agreed with the Governor that the Church would have a bolstering effect on government. See Cossit to SPG, Mar. 9, 1773, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 773209, and Oct. 9, 1773, SPG Papers, 132.


64 Wentworth to Paul Wentworth, Oct. 27, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 306.


67 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Nov. 2, 1770, WWM, Rl-1321; Parochial Records of Queen's Chapel, 81.

68 Brewster, Rambles, 1:112-15; Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Nov. 2, 1770, WWM, Rl-1321.

69 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Feb. 18, 1770, EH0, C.0.5/930; William G. Saltonstall, Ports of Piscataqua (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), 87; NHSP, 7:232; Knollenberg, Growth of the American Revolution, 68–69.
CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GRANTS AND TROUBLE FROM WITHIN:
1770-1773

The delicate tranquility that John Wentworth was nurturing in New Hampshire was smashed by events in Boston on March 5, 1770. The slowly building bomb of human emotion, the hate and resentment growing between the townspeople and the British troops, finally exploded. A confrontation between a cursing, snowball-throwing mob, by now a common sight in Boston, and a party of grenadiers resulted in disaster. Goaded by insults, threats, and a barrage of missiles, the soldiers fired their muskets into the crowd killing five men. Although a tragic incident, this "massacre," as it was termed by Boston's radical press, served the purpose of Sam Adams and other leaders of the liberal party in arousing anti-British feeling to a new high. As Governor Wentworth soon found out, this feeling was not confined by the boundaries of Massachusetts.

Two weeks after the shooting the town of New Ipswich in New Hampshire agreed to join Boston's program of non-consumption and boycott. At a town meeting on March 26, Exeter voted to discourage the importation and consumption of British goods, to stop consuming tea, and to promote manufacturing in the colonies. Although not going this far, Portsmouth, on April 11, banned further purchases from one McMasters, apparently the Scottish merchant whom Wentworth had reported earlier was operating so successfully in town. Circumventing the Boston boycott, McMasters had been importing and selling British goods through
Portsmouth with little trouble. Now, anyone found dealing with him was to be branded "unfriendly to the Interest of his Country." Tavern-keepers selling any of his goods would lose their licenses.²

These were the first overt actions taken in New Hampshire in sympathy with the colonial boycott of British goods. For John Wentworth, however, this was not the worst result of the Boston Massacre. More serious was an investigation by a committee in Exeter of the petition for redress of grievances that had been voted by the Assembly in 1768 to be sent to the Crown. At the town meeting it was reported that the petition had in November, 1768, been sent to Speaker Gilman in Exeter for his signature, thence to be forwarded to New Hampshire's agent in London. It was discovered, however, that the petition was never sent because Gilman would not sign it unless he could add a postscript expressing his disagreement with its contents. The town hoped that this would not be interpreted in England "as a Submission to the unconstitutional Revenue Acts." Exeter then voted that the petition be sent immediately and that expressions of New Hampshire's concurrence in the united cause against the British measures be forwarded to the other colonies.³

A writer in the New Hampshire Gazette wondered how such a lapse could have gone undetected all this time, and raised questions concerning the Assembly's role in the whole affair. Offering no explanations, the Assembly on April 14 moved that "the Address to his Majesty which was prepared some time past . . . should now be forwarded." Hardly the firebrands of
Massachusetts or Virginia, the New Hampshire representatives in a separate letter instructed Barlow Trescothick not to present the petition if the Townshend duties had been repealed. Making clear their intent in taking this action now, they told their agent that "if it has no other effect, . . . it may serve as a Remembrancer that we acted in Concert with our neighbors." To this end the letter and resolves from Virginia that had been laid before the House in January were brought out again. This time an answer was prepared expressing concurrence with the Burgesses' stand against Parliament's revival of the treason act that would send colonists accused of this crime to England for trial. Similar resolves from Maryland were also affirmatively answered. In addition, to further ensure that New Hampshire's failure to petition the Crown until now was not seen as weakness in the cause, a duplicate of the Assembly's letter of 1768 expressing agreement with Virginia's petition of that year was made and sent along with the answer to the more recent letter.4

John Wentworth watched helplessly as this flurry of anti-British activity swept through his province. Although the actions taken were mild and left intact New Hampshire's image as one of, if not the most conservative of the colonies, for Wentworth they spoiled his record of having kept the province almost entirely free of opposition to Britain. This time there was no way he could prevent the petition from being sent. The Assembly may have been cooperative in the first instance, but now that their failure to follow up on the petition had been made public, John doubtless realized that for reasons of saving face they had no choice but to send it.
Unfortunately for him, he had to report this and the other recent occurrences in New Hampshire to the Earl of Hillsborough. He nevertheless made clear in his letter that his province was not alone. As he explained it, the killing of civilians by soldiers in Boston had "spread a flame like wildfire thro' all the Continent." Had it not been for this, he went on, the Assembly's petition "which has laid on their Table neglected for two years" would "have slept for ever."

For Hillsborough the Governor naturally wanted to put the situation in the best possible light. He assured the Secretary that the petition was "much more moderate than any other that has been sent" and, stretching the truth somewhat, asserted that the instructions to New Hampshire's agent directed him not to present it if its "Contents should render it inexpedient." In fact, the Assembly's instructions said nothing about the petition's "contents"; the only condition under which suppression was approved was prior repeal of the Townshend duties. John also emphasized that, due much to his own unstinting efforts, peace had been maintained in New Hampshire. And he pointed out that although the merchant McMasters was being boycotted, it had been voted that he should suffer no abuse.

John Wentworth nevertheless did not try to hide the fact that feelings were running high against Great Britain. "I never saw such an exasperated spirit in this Province." he told Hillsborough. Everyone was convinced, he continued, that the Customs Commissioners and the revenue acts were designed to "absorb the property and destroy the Lives of the people." Reason was of no use to dissuade them. Adding to his miseries
at this time were "a violent Rheumatic Complain," and the ironic fact that when he wrote to Hillsborough on April 12, he had been playing host for nearly three weeks to William Burch and Henry Hulton, two members of the Customs Board in Boston. Following the massacre the great uprising in feeling against British officials in Boston had compelled all of the Commissioners except John Temple to flee the city. Governor Wentworth was not far away and his reputation for keeping the peace and maintaining loyalty to the Crown made Portsmouth a logical place for Burch and Hulton to seek asylum until tempers had cooled in Boston. They undoubtedly did not know of Wentworth's strong feelings against the Customs Board and its activities, and one can only speculate on the degree of cordiality extended to these men by the Governor during their stay. As a fellow royal official he was of course obligated to be of assistance, but they did not make his job any easier. When it was known the Commissioners were in town, attempts were made to start a riot against them. Wentworth was able to quell this incipient uprising, but warned that if Charles Paxton, another member of the Board, showed up in Portsmouth he would not be able to guarantee the safety of any of them.  

Prospects indeed looked bleak to John Wentworth in mid-April, 1770. But things were not as bad as they seemed, and conditions in New Hampshire gradually began to improve again. By the end of the month one potential source of trouble evaporated when Hulton and Burch departed for Brookline near Boston where Hulton lived. Neither did the disclosure that the petition to the Crown had not been sent prove to be a problem for John.
It was common knowledge that he had been against it and, as the Crown's representative, it must have been expected that he would try to discourage the Assembly from sending it. Any fault for not forwarding the petition after it had been voted to do so lay with the Speaker and, seemingly, other members of the Assembly who did not speak up. Peter Gilman lost his seat at the next election, but the popularity of the Governor did not appear to suffer as the result of this incident.

The nascent boycott movement in New Hampshire never got off the ground. In July the town of Portsmouth appointed a committee to draw up resolutions on non-importation. When the committee reported back, there was sentiment for the movement but Woodbury Langdon, a member of the committee, prevented any resolves from being adopted. Boston threatened to cut off trade with the recalcitrant merchants of Portsmouth if they did not take some positive action, but by that time it was too late. By May, word had arrived in America of the repeal of all the Townshend duties except that on tea, which Parliament insisted be retained as a symbol of its right to tax the colonies. With that news the impetus to continue the boycott of British goods disappeared. One by one the major ports, New York, Philadelphia, even Boston, diluted their non-importation agreements so that by the fall of 1770 the movement was virtually dead.  

In October Wentworth could report to the Secretary of State that a mood of peace was solidly entrenched in New Hampshire. Again he took the credit for removing the people's doubts and fears. He did not relate how this was accomplished,
but did explain that he kept the peace by announcing that he
would oppose in person any unlawful action. But the people
had been most cooperative. Attempts by the "Hydra headed
demagogues at Boston" to stir up trouble in Portsmouth, he
told Hillsborough, had been of no avail. Neither had Boston's
scheme "to Starve and compel" New Hampshire into its "Combina-
tion" disaffected the people. In fact it was only the
maintenance of the rule of law in New Hampshire that had
prevented an emissary of the Massachusetts radicals from being
tarred and feathered and run out of town. John was obviously
pleased to be able to tell the Colonial Secretary that the
crisis of the Boston Massacre had passed, and that reason and
loyalty to government had returned to New Hampshire with, as
he believed, "a degree of Success, that is Singular in the
Provinces of America." 9

In New Hampshire, as in most of the other colonies for
the next several years following the demise of the non-importa-
tion movement, there was no serious trouble. Although the tax
on tea had been retained, the repeal of the remaining Townshend
duties pushed the dispute between the colonies and England into
the background. Under this prevailing calm the Governor,
Assembly, and people alike were able to concentrate on and
enjoy more positive developments within the province. In March,
1771, John was finally able to announce to the Assembly that
the act for dividing the province into counties had been approved
by the King in Council. It had been over two years since the
act was passed and everyone, not least the Governor, was
relieved and pleased with this news. The following week, in
an uncharacteristic act of generosity, the Assembly voted Wentworth £100 "for sundry Extra services Render'd the Province." What these services were is unknown, but it seems not unreasonable that the Governor was being rewarded for his effort in securing the much desired county division.

In April, Barlow Trecothick forwarded equally exciting news. By vote of the Commons, New Hampshire was at last to receive its claim for expenses for the last war, more than £6,000. John had worked on this project himself when he was in England and many no doubt had given up any hope of ever seeing the money. Such a sum, nearly three times the annual supply, certainly meant a great deal to a small province like New Hampshire. In December John informed the Assembly that the payment had been made. At the same time he put in a personal plea for payment of expenses incurred while serving in England in, what he termed, the "unavoidably expensive and peculiarly laborious agency for this Province." He told the representatives that he had not pressed them for it before because he did not want to burden the taxpayers. Undoubtedly the real reason had been his realization that he had no chance of collecting. It was hard enough just to talk the Assembly out of a meagre salary. Now, however, his instincts were right. In January, 1772, the Assembly feeling generous with its newfound wealth from the British Government, voted Wentworth £500 for "extraordinary services." At this same time they honored another request by the Governor. Samuel Holland, His Majesty's Surveyor for the Northern District of North America, had offered his services during the winter to carry out a detailed survey
of New Hampshire. As Wentworth's instructions called for this, he was anxious to take advantage of Holland's offer. Although the House had refused a similar request before, it now approved the sum required for the survey.11

Relations between the Governor and the Assembly in New Hampshire obviously were good. But John Wentworth was not lulled by this new surge of internal harmony into believing that the cleavage between the colonies and Great Britain was mended. There was ample evidence that although the immediate crisis had abated, the root problems had not been solved. In November, 1770, John's hopes that the Ministry had become more sensitive to the situation in America were dealt another blow when John Temple was removed from the Customs Board in Boston. Temple, who had married into the Bowdoin family, was increasingly linked with Boston's whig element. Governor Bernard and the other Commissioners considered him an obstructionist in the way of their policy and Bernard requested his removal. John Wentworth, however, felt John Temple was the only competent member of the American Customs Commission. When Bernard's request was granted, John readily wrote recommendations for Temple to carry to England in his attempt to vindicate his conduct and, if possible, secure a better position. Here was just another example for Wentworth of Whitehall aggravating rather than improving the situation in America.

Signs were abundant, too, that the colonists had not forgotten the dispute. In March, 1771, on the first anniversary of the Boston Massacre, a contributor to the New Hampshire Gazette recommended an annual commemoration of the event so
that people might be constantly on their guard against being reduced to slavery by tyrants. More serious was an incident the following October when mob action against the Customs Service appeared in Portsmouth for the first time. On the twenty-sixth the brig Resolution, owned principally by Samuel Cutts, entered its cargo without problem at the Piscataqua Customs House. Two days later, however, the Collector of the port, suspecting that the Resolution's master had not reported all of the dutiable molasses on board, seized the ship and part of its cargo. The Collector, new at his post, was George Meserve, the former stamp distributor who had been threatened and forced to give up that position at the time of the Stamp Act.

Meserve had only two tidewaiters to guard the vessel until trial could be held in the vice-admiralty court, and he asked Wentworth for help. The Governor responded by ordering Captain Cochran and four of his men from Port William and Mary to board the Resolution. This armed guard notwithstanding, at midnight on October 29, fifty armed and disguised men suddenly "appeared on Deck." They locked the waiters in the cabin and ordered the Captain and his men off the ship. Refusing to be cowed, Cochran and the soldiers held their position on the quarterdeck but were helpless to prevent the removal of between forty and fifty hogsheads of molasses that had not been legally entered. By the time the Collector could call out the Sheriff and the magistrates, the men and molasses had disappeared and the town was quiet.
One week later the molasses on which the duty had been paid was also forcibly removed from the ship. The rest of the Resolution's cargo, however, was condemned when trial was held in admiralty court on the fourteenth of November. At that time one Jesse Saville, a tidewater who was known to be an informer for the customs service in Massachusetts, was called to testify. Word of this soon spread and when Saville emerged from the trial at dusk, he found a crowd of some 500 "Sailors, Labourers and Boys" waiting for him. He was chased through the streets, caught, and was being knocked around when several "Gentlemen" happened by who rescued him and broke up the mob. Hearing the noise and confusion Wentworth himself headed out into the streets and, as he told Hillsborough, "walk'd unattended and publickly thro' the midst of those remaining."

What he found was a residue of some 300 people from the mob loitering about in small "knots" of 6 to 12. Expecting trouble, Wentworth was ready to call out every law officer in New Hampshire if necessary. Fortunately it was not. Although both he and the customs officials were in the street, no noise or sign of disrespect was raised against any of them "as is evident," he reported to Hillsborough, "for my Chariot pass'd uninterruptedly thro' them four times." Nevertheless, he had seen in his own province what could happen when the revenue laws were rigidly enforced. John admitted that Meserve's proceedings were new to New Hampshire. He felt, however that it had been the right thing to do and that the Resolution's owner, Samuel Cutts, deserved to lose his cargo. The whole episode of the Resolution, occurring in an overwhelmingly loyal
province such as his own and at a time when peace and tranquility had seemingly returned to all of the colonies, was just more evidence to support John Wentworth's by now pessimistic belief that the differences between the colonies and England had become deep seated and would not disappear with superficial solutions.

In spite of the repeal of the Townshend duties and the demise of non-importation, John Wentworth became increasingly negative about the situation in America. This stemmed largely from what he detected as a very subtle yet definite hardening of attitude on the part of the colonists. Late in 1770, just as conditions were returning to a semblance of normality, John wrote to Rockingham that "the change of manners and sentiment . . . are so gradual, and marked with such imperceptible effects, that time only can discover them." Violence could be suppressed but, he went on, "I verily think a far more dangerous spirit is thereby rooting in the minds of the people—who begin to think Great Britain intends to enslave and destroy them by mere force—whence it is easy to see a settled gloom and inquietude take place every where." This deepening belief by the people that Britain now was determined on oppressing them was, in John Wentworth's opinion, "much more important than all the noice and reprehensible violences that have preceded this time." As he told Rockingham, "This is such a marking period in American affairs, that I dare not omit mentioning it."15

What John seemed to be saying was that the disturbances in the colonies had been fomented by only a small group of
people. Britain's reaction, however, was having the effect of turning many more colonists against the mother country. This was a fatal mistake from which there might be no turning back. By July, 1771, Wentworth's viewpoint had not changed. The "present calm" he attributed to "Supression" rather than "eradication." Although he was not overtly critical of the government at Whitehall, he made clear to Rockingham his belief that the Ministry could and should embark on a more enlightened policy if ultimate disaster was to be averted. "Alienation," he wrote, "takes deeper Root in these quieter times than when much evaporated in passion: And I do verily believe America is lost to England unless some conciliatory means of mutual use and safety are adopted. There is no doubt but that Great Britain can subdue and Subordinate America; but it may be apprehended that such a vast extended Continent of disgusted Subjects wou'd be extremely useless if not finally detrimental." To John Wentworth, force was not the answer. Rather, the only viable solution lay in the same theme that he had advocated to Rockingham at the time of the Stamp Act and which he now repeated. The only realistic expectation for continued harmony between England and her colonies, he wrote, lay in "the reciprocal benefit of both." America and Britain should "be inviolably cemented by mutual interest—the only sufficient bond of durable connection between countries or even Members of the Same Country." John Wentworth perceptively realized that a continued preoccupation in Britain with the right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies in all cases, as evidenced by retention of the duty on tea, would serve only to
drive America further into opposition. What was needed in England were some moderate, prudent, and, most of all, practical minds in the government that realized the most effective and, in the long-run profitable, policy was one that maximized advantages for all parts of the empire by minimizing restrictions on trade. Wentworth doubtless more than ever wished the Rockingham Whigs back in power.

Although attitudes seemed to be changing for the worse, the general calm that had settled over America was welcome. It not only gave Rockingham, Burke, and other friends of the colonies in England a chance to try to improve the situation there, it allowed John Wentworth to devote some time to the particular interests of New Hampshire. One concern especially occupied the Governor's mind until nearly the end of 1771. That was his desire to regain jurisdiction over the land west of the Connecticut River, that area decreed part of New York by the Order in Council of 1764.

That John Wentworth should be interested in this region is easily understandable. Bounded by the Connecticut on the east and to the west by Lake Champlain and a line roughly twenty miles east of the Hudson, this area that was later to become the state of Vermont would have doubled the size of New Hampshire. Abounding in tall pine forests and fertile river valleys, it had been too great a temptation to Benning Wentworth who granted townships covering half the area. It also loomed large in the eyes of his successor who was making a concerted effort to improve the fortunes of his province through a program of settling and developing the interior. With lands left to grant
east of the Connecticut becoming fewer and fewer, it was only natural that New Hampshire's Governor should begin to look longingly at the millions of acres of virtually virgin soil to the west. This was an obvious place for the expansion of New Hampshire settlement, especially in the Connecticut River valley, a region with a natural unity of its own. Although a large number of towns had been granted, not many had actually been settled. In 1765 an estimated 225 families on each side of the Green Mountains were scattered thinly throughout a few towns. Here then was a great expanse of valuable land just waiting to yield its riches to the woodsman's axe and the farmer's spade. New Hampshire might profit enormously from the resources of this region.

Another source of encouragement for John Wentworth's interest west of the Connecticut lay in the number of important New Hampshire people who owned land there. Thanks to Benning Wentworth, many leading merchants of Portsmouth, Councillors, and members of the Assembly had received grants in the area. These proprietors, as with the great majority of others in New York, Connecticut, and other provinces, were holding their shares for speculative purposes. They too had high hopes for the development of the region and would welcome New Hampshire control over it. Yet New Hampshire, in spite of Benning Wentworth's boldness, had never had clear title to the land and the decision in England in 1764 had seemingly decided jurisdiction once and for all in favor of New York. Subsequent events, however, generated renewed hope for New Hampshire's claim.
In 1765 settlers occupying New Hampshire grants west of the Green Mountains were given cause for alarm when they encountered Isaac Vrooman, a surveyor working for James Duane and several other New York speculators who claimed the land they were living on under a patent issued by Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden of New York. The inhabitants were informed that they might either buy or lease the land, land that they already assumed they owned. An order was shortly issued by the New York Council that no actual settler should be dispossessed of his property. Soon, however, both settlers and the vastly larger numbers of non-resident proprietors were disturbed by the realization that to maintain possession of their land they would have to pay relatively high fees for confirmatory patents from New York. For both settlers living at subsistence level and proprietors owning large tracts of land, this would be disastrous. In addition, they would be subject to New York quitrents which were considerably higher than those of New Hampshire. The New Hampshire grantees were finally goaded into action by Governor Henry Moore and the New York Council. In June, 1766, an order was issued that all those holding New Hampshire titles must have them confirmed by New York within three months or face the loss of their land.\textsuperscript{21}

In the fall of 1766 several meetings of settlers and non-resident proprietors held in Massachusetts and New York resulted in a decision to petition the King. Arguing that the high fees and quitrents demanded by New York were an intolerable burden, the petitioners asked that their original titles be confirmed and that jurisdiction over land west of the Connecticut
River be vested in New Hampshire. Appointed to present the petitions and work for their acceptance in England were Samuel Robinson, a resident of Bennington, the oldest town in the grants and named for John Wentworth's uncle, and William Samuel Johnson, a Connecticut lawyer and special agent for that colony who had a reputation as a very able man. The agents presented their case in March, 1767, and at the same time enlisted a powerful ally, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

In all of Benning Wentworth's grants, shares had been set aside for the Church of England and for the SPG. Now, in a petition to the King drawn up by Johnson for the SPG, New York was charged with regranting these lands without reserving the customary shares for the Church and the Society. The SPG claimed it was thus being divested of what rightfully belonged to it. The efforts of Johnson and Robinson appeared to be paying off when, on July 24, 1767, the King in Council issued an order that the Governor of New York "do not . . . presume to make any Grant whatever of any Part of the Lands described in the said Report of the Committee on Plantation Affairs until his Majesty's further Pleasure shall be known." This restraining order on New York promised nothing to the New Hampshire grantees but, significantly, it gave them hope.

Up to this time New Hampshire had taken no part in the controversy between the grantees and New York. It was not long before that changed. Given a new lease on life by the Order in Council, the proprietors of the New Hampshire grants were determined to press on for victory. Looking for help wherever they could find it, it became obvious that their case
would be greatly enhanced if the Governor and legislature of New Hampshire could be enlisted as allies in the cause. Accordingly, on October 18, 1768, John Wendell of Portsmouth, who had been appointed American agent by the proprietors petitioning the King, presented a memorial to Governor John Wentworth, the Council, and the Assembly, in behalf of more than one thousand grantees of lands west of the Connecticut River explaining their desire to have the area "re-annexed" to New Hampshire. Wendell also included an extract of a letter from William Samuel Johnson "from which may be deduced," he pointed out, "that if the legislature of this Province would join with said Grantees in their application to his Majesty in Council, the one for the Jurisdiction, and the other for the Property of said Lands, there is a great Probability of success to both." Johnson had written to Wendell proclaiming his surprise that New Hampshire had not taken a more active part in attempting to get the lands back, and suggesting that had the province been more aggressive, jurisdiction would probably have been regained by now.

The legislature took no immediate action in regard to the memorial. Wendell's plea, however, stimulated the interest of Governor Wentworth whose thoughts now turned to the enticing prospect of a New Hampshire doubled in size by the addition of land west of the Connecticut. The matter was put before him again at the end of November when Wendell, upon hearing of the death of Samuel Robinson in England, sent him another petition in behalf of the proprietors. This time two additional reasons were presented to support the case for New Hampshire jurisdiction. The grantees complained that under New York they had to travel
great distances for the administration of justice, and that the organization of local government was not of the constitutional type they were familiar with. New York made no provision for representative government as exercised in the New England town meeting. Very shortly another problem emerged which provided John Wentworth the opportunity to take action on his own.

In December, 1768, Wentworth was visited in Portsmouth by one William Dean, an inhabitant of Windsor on the far side of the Connecticut River. Dean told the Governor that he had been trying to get the trees on his land surveyed so that he might know which ones he could legally cut. He claimed that Benjamin Whiting, a resident of Newbury upriver from Windsor and one of Wentworth's deputy surveyors, had not responded to his requests. Dean then asked that he be appointed a deputy surveyor himself. Wentworth did not want to make any more appointments, but while Dean was still in the Governor's office, Whiting and another deputy, Captain John Peters, came in and promised that they would do the job. With that assurance, Dean returned home.24

Early in January, 1769, however, John Wentworth received information from Israel Curtis, another Windsor resident, that William Dean was illegally cutting mast trees. With that, John determined to go himself and put a stop to this brazen depredation by a man who less than a month earlier had met with him and asked to become a deputy surveyor. Despite what he described as a "painful Rheumatic Complaint in my Breast, which extends to my Neck and throat," Wentworth, in the middle of
January during one of the bitterest winters in years, set off on horseback for the Connecticut River. He traveled, as he later explained, "three hundred miles in excessive Cold and Snow, thro' a Wilderness, almost uninhabited." The effort, however, proved worthwhile. Crossing the ice on the Connecticut, John caught the unsuspecting Deans, William and his sons, William, Jr. and Willard, red-handed in the act of cutting mast pines. Over 500 logs lay on the frozen river waiting the spring thaw to float them to sawmills in Massachusetts. Three trees were still on the ground which measured from thirty-two to forty-four inches in diameter, well over the legal cutting limit of twenty-four inches. Wentworth in addition had three witnesses willing to testify to 17 logs cut by the Deans in December which measured between twenty-eight and forty inches.

Among those with the Governor in his confrontation with the Deans was a mastliner who for many years had worked the yards in Portsmouth. He described the seized logs as among "the best and prettyest Timber he had ever seen." According to another witness, Elijah Granger, with whom William Dean had contracted for the lumber, Wentworth told Dean: "Mr. Dean, you have been guilty of a very ungodly trick. You are the person who applyed to me at Portsmouth for a Deputation to be a Surveyor. You would have made fine havock by being a Surveyor." Also present was Benjamin Wait, one of Dean's neighbors, who pointed out that most of the cutting had not even taken place on Dean's land. With all the evidence he needed, John did not tarry long. He hurried back to Portsmouth to institute proceedings against the Deans in the admiralty court.
John Wentworth was concerned about this flagrant violation of the pine laws. Shortly upon returning from his trek across New Hampshire he wrote to Jared Ingersoll, the one-time enemy of the Wentworth family who now was judge of vice-admiralty at New Haven, requesting that process be initiated against the Deans. Devotion to his duty as Surveyor General of the woods, however, had not been the only reason driving Wentworth 300 miles through the forbidding elements of a frigid New Hampshire January. He also had been thinking about the possibility of regaining jurisdiction west of the Connecticut River. His interest in this project rekindled, probably by John Wendell's petitions of late 1768, Wentworth while in Windsor seems to have met with Nathan Stone, a political leader of the town and fierce opponent of New York authority. Not surprisingly, on the second Tuesday in March, the traditional New Hampshire day for holding town meetings, Windsor held a meeting to organize its town government and proceeded to do so in accordance with New Hampshire rather than New York practice.  

There is little question of John Wentworth's feeling at this time. He told William Bayard that the 1764 boundary decision in England had been made "upon false, absurd and iniquitous Misinformation." Neither was the Governor the only one who was concerned for, as he explained to Bayard, "Many Gentlemen of respect and property" in Portsmouth had become worried about the security of their holdings under the New York government and were considering petitions to the King and Parliament. Wentworth noted that he had written nothing on the affair himself, but confidently predicted that the region
west of the Connecticut "will very shortly be reannex'd to New Hampshire." News of John Wentworth's enlistment in the cause of the New Hampshire grantees (against New York) traveled fast. In early May, William Samuel Johnson in England wrote to a friend: "I am glad that Govr. Wentworth appears at length disposed to give the Proprietor's his assistance, had he embarked on it heartily when his friends [The Rockingham Ministry] were in power three years ago, I doubt not the matter might have been set right with great ease."29

On October 19, 1769, a serious confrontation occurred at the farm of New Hampshire grantee, James Breakenridge, in Bennington. Surveyors working for the owners of a New York grant that conflicted with the Bennington patent were stopped by Breakenridge and a group of armed friends and, according to the surveyors, threatened with violence. New York considered this action grave enough to swear out arrest warrants for the members of what it considered this disorderly mob. At the same time, nearly 500 settlers of Bennington and five other nearby towns signed a petition addressed to Governor John Wentworth. This petition proclaimed the hardships endured by the settlers as a result of being placed under New York jurisdiction, and mentioned ejectment suits against them that were pending in the New York courts. These suits were not unrelated to the proceedings in the case of the Deans.30

Wentworth had discovered that Ingersoll did not have jurisdiction in the case. It thus had been transferred to the vice-admiralty court of Judge Richard Morris in New York. Even with that done, processes moved slowly, and in the meantime
John discovered that William Dean had conveyed his property to another party and left the area. He saw little chance of catching Dean, but held out hope of at least making him forfeit his land. With this in mind, in July he wrote to John Tabor Kempe, who as Attorney General for New York had been assigned by Judge Morris to prosecute the case, to "try at least the validity of his Dean's Conveyances." Wentworth's reluctance to give up on the case, and especially his determination to get at Dean's land, was of great significance to the prosecutor.

John Tabor Kempe, along with James Duane, who ironically served as defense counsel for the Deans, was one of the largest holders of New York grants within the disputed region. It can hardly be coincidental that Kempe and Duane, who were serving on opposite sides in the Dean case, at this very time chose to pool their efforts in beginning ejectment proceedings in the New York courts against persons occupying land under New Hampshire grants that conflicted with their own claims. Kempe and Duane doubtless realized that regardless of what happened to the Deans personally, if Wentworth was successful in having their land forfeited in payment for their crimes against the King's woods, a dangerous precedent would be set favoring the title of the New Hampshire grantees. The reason for this lay in the townships grants made by Benning Wentworth. Under the New Hampshire town charters, anyone found guilty of violating the forest laws was to lose his land. This was a penalty over and above that prescribed by Parliamentary law and applied only to those holding New Hampshire grants. Were Dean forced to forfeit his land, it would mean that Benning Wentworth's
grants, in the eyes of the court, were indeed valid and that Kempe and Duane had no claim to their 26,000 acres which overlay New Hampshire grants.\textsuperscript{32} From John Wentworth's point of view, it might also be a large step toward getting that land back for New Hampshire. The suits filed in New York by Kempe and Duane, aimed at ejecting New Hampshire grantees from their land, were an attempt to counteract Wentworth's move by setting a precedent that would confirm New York titles.

That John Wentworth had wholeheartedly entered into an effort to regain control over the disputed region became evident in December, 1769, when petitions were circulated in New York's Cumberland County, reportedly at the Governor's instigation, asking for a return to New Hampshire jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{33} In February he was anxiously awaiting the petitions so that he could send them to his kinsman, Paul Wentworth, whom he had recommended to the grantees for their agent in England. On the eighteenth Wentworth wrote to Hillsborough informing him of the forthcoming petition to the King from settlers west of the Connecticut desiring reannexation to New Hampshire. He explained that these people were "objects of real Compassion. Already many of them fill our Streets, and should they finally be ousted, Some Many Hundreds will inevitably perish by famine, and Despair urge Multitudes to fall Victims to the Laws."

Affecting an objective pose, John told Hillsborough that he would make no judgment on the matter. He had, however, as he well knew, thoroughly condemned New York with his description of "Confusion," "wretchedness," and "Devastation." The Council, he noted, was drawing up a full report on the situation. John
Wentworth fully expected New Hampshire to regain its lost territory for in the spring he recommended the uninhabited town of Landaff, close to the Connecticut River, as the home of Dartmouth College on the grounds that it would be near the center of the province.\textsuperscript{34}

In the meantime the Deans, in spite of help from friends, had been apprehended and brought to trial. When the case opened in October, testimony was taken against the defendants charging them with the illegal destruction of seventeen white pine trees. The penalty involved was £50 sterling per tree. The Deans apparently produced no witnesses on their behalf and in December, John Wentworth got his much desired conviction. The Deans were fined for sixteen trees amounting to £800 sterling. The satisfaction John must have felt on receipt of this news was, however, of short duration. He soon learned that during the proceedings the Deans had been visited in jail in New York by one Samuel Wells, a justice of the Court of Common Pleas in Cumberland County. William Dean, who had conveyed his estate earlier in the year and then taken repossession of it, now conveyed it again, this time to Judge Wells. Wells placed Dean's personal property in the possession of John Grout, a local attorney, for safekeeping in an unknown location. The Deans thus possessed nothing that could be seized for payment of their fine. In lieu of this Judge Morris, on January 25, 1770, sentenced William Dean to four months in prison and his sons to three. This must have seemed to the Deans fair justice indeed, at least in the face of the astronomical sum of £800.\textsuperscript{35}
John Wentworth was furious. Not only had the Deans suffered little, but court costs of this lengthy proceeding now fell on the Crown. Worst of all, his design on the Deans' lands as part of the attempt to secure the validity of New Hampshire titles had been foiled. John had learned during the fall that men of property in New York were apprehensive that the Dean case posed a threat to their interests in the region disputed with the New Hampshire grantees. He had not, however, expected this result. Nevertheless, he was not willing to give up easily. Early in February he sent a letter and a memorial to Lieutenant Governor Colden of New York castigating Wells for his obstruction of the service of the King, and requesting that the Deans' land be escheated to the Crown "according to the Express Tenor of that Grant by which they held"—a New Hampshire grant—on the grounds that conveyances such as that made by Dean to Wells were not valid.36

If Wentworth was angry with Wells and his abettors, New York officials were just as displeased with Wentworth. They knew of his interference and even attributed the trouble on the west side of the Green Mountains, where Wentworth had never ventured, to his encouragement. In December, Cadwallader Colden had written to Wentworth desiring a public statement by the Governor that would discourage further resistance to New York by settlers in the Bennington area who, Colden noted, "seem to flatter themselves . . . will be favoured with the weight of your Authority." John replied that he had always discon- tenanced unlawful resistance to authority and, he told Colden, "I am at a loss, by what means it can be more publicly testify'd." Since he would not cooperate with New York, he should have
expected little cooperation in return. To his complaint against
the activities of Judge Wells, Colden responded that the convey­
ance of property had been taken by the justice merely to provide
money for the hard-pressed Deans to live on while in jail. It
was, asserted Colden, "an Act of Humanity and not criminal in Mr.
Wells." As for the escheatment of the Deans' land, that matter
was being referred to the New York Council for consideration. 37
It would be some time before John Wentworth received an official
reply to his request. New York officials and landholders had
called Wentworth's bluff and now they were waiting to play their
own trump. This they hoped to find in the ejectment suits.

In May, 1770, John Wentworth was paid a visit in
Portsmouth by one Ethan Allen. Allen, who along with his
brothers had speculated heavily in the New Hampshire grants,
had been chosen in Bennington by the New Hampshire proprietors
to represent them in the ejectment suits. He came to procure
from Wentworth copies of the original grants made by Benning
Wentworth west of the Connecticut and the royal instructions
under which those grants were made. Eager to help in any way,
John readily produced the desired documents and recommended as
legal counsel Jared Ingersoll of New Haven. Allen proceeded
to New Haven from where he and Ingersoll went to Albany where
the ejectment proceedings opened in June. It became apparent
almost immediately that the New Hampshire title holders had
little chance of winning. When the judge refused to admit as
evidence the documents Wentworth had provided, Ingersoll, as
Ethan Allen's brother Ira later wrote, "saw the cause was
already prejudged, and did not attempt to defend it." It was
charged that no proof had been produced that New Hampshire
ever had any claim to land west of the Connecticut River or that Benning Wentworth had any right to grant it. A precedent had now been set for removal of New Hampshire grantees who failed to conform to New York regulations and pay the requisite fees. Moreover, John Wentworth's hope for a precedent of his own that might go far toward establishing New Hampshire's rightful claim to the disputed territory was shortly squelched. On September 25, 1770, the New York Council finally submitted its report on his request for the escheatment of the Deans' land under the terms of the New Hampshire charter. That could not be done, according to the Council, "because we consider the Grant which his Excellency refers to, as merely void for want of Authority in the Government of New Hampshire, to issue Patents for Lands . . . on the West side of Connecticut River." Thus by the fall of 1770, New York appeared to have successfully thwarted John Wentworth's efforts to build a case for reversion of the disputed territory to New Hampshire.

Wentworth, however, had not given up and he believed he could count on the continued support of many people west of the Connecticut River. In May and June there had been serious riots against New York authority in Windsor and, if Ethan Allen could be believed, those west of the Green Mountains would not meekly submit either. When, during the course of the ejectment proceedings Allen was visited by Duane and Kempe urging him to persuade the New Hampshire grantees to make the best possible terms with their New York landlords, he retorted, "The Gods of the valleys are not Gods of the hills," and if they did not understand they could come up to Bennington to see what he meant! Allen's promise was soon made good when new attempts
by New York patentees to survey their land were met by armed resistance. As time went on, violence became increasingly commonplace on the grants. Wentworth continued to urge these people not to accept New York jurisdiction and to help him work for reversion to New Hampshire.

In October he wrote to Hillsborough referring to the "deplorable State" of the settlers on the far side of the Connecticut and pointing out that much of their trouble could never be remedied due to their great distance from the New York capital. Portsmouth was of course much closer. John sent his views to England in November with John Temple who was then departing to vindicate himself with the home government. Temple was to assure authorities that the restoration of the disputed region to New Hampshire "will be a public charity to a distressed people and will also promote the King's service."

In January, 1771, Wentworth was busy soliciting more petitions from west of the river because, as he said of the people living there, "As much might they hope for a Crop, without planting--as for redress without timely setting forth the Calamities they endure." He had also fixed on a survey of the Connecticut River in February as an important part of his mounting effort to retrieve New Hampshire's lost land. His reasons for this he disclosed to Eleazar Wheelock. "I am well inform'd that your River is laid down, trending to the Westward, and heading in Lake Champlain in a Map transmitted from New York, upon which it was tho't proper to annex the district in consideration to New York. I therefore imagine, that the true course of said River being proved by this Survey, will exceedingly discover the practiced impositions ... and promote a restoration."
John was confident enough to assure Wheelock "That there is not the least doubt but that these Lands on the West Side of the river will be immediately reannex'd to this Province." The New Yorkers, however, had other ideas and by this time they had learned to play Wentworth's game. Shortly after the arrival of John Dunmore as the new governor in October, 1770, New York began to circulate petitions of its own complaining of interference from New Hampshire designed "to aggrandize the family of the late Governour Wentworth," and asking for New York confirmation of New Hampshire titles for "moderate fees." In March, 1771, Dunmore sent these petitions to Hillsborough with an account of the difficulties in the New Hampshire grants and affidavits providing evidence that "the disorders above mentioned are promoted by people of the greatest power in the Province of New Hampshire." The affidavits mentioned John Wentworth by name. This increased militance on the part of New York seems about this time to have given some residents west of the river second thoughts about signing John Wentworth's petitions. Eleazar Wheelock reported to the Governor in January that the people of Norwich across from Hanover had been placed under a "destroying fear" by New York agents. In the meantime in England the Board of Trade was delaying its decision on the dispute in anticipation of the report of the New Hampshire Council that Wentworth had promised a year earlier. Hillsborough wrote repeatedly to remind John of the need for this report. In August the Council finally completed its evaluation of the problem. Expectedly, the report consisted of a series of reasons, including historical precedents, why New Hampshire's boundary should extend to within twenty miles of the Hudson
River. Wentworth forwarded this document to Hillsborough on the twentieth with the pointedly neutral comment that, because the matter had originated prior to his governorship, he had little to say about it. His only interest, he claimed, was that those holding New Hampshire titles should be justly treated. John noted, however, that the people had petitioned to be returned to New Hampshire jurisdiction "without which," he went on to add, "a confirmation of property cannot fully releive the inhabitants who in every instance of manners, interest, situation and interior police, are and must ever be strongly connected with and bound to this Province." He then explained why this region, which could produce large quantities of corn for export, was much more valuable to New Hampshire than it could ever be for New York.42

It thus is clear that in the late summer of 1771 John Wentworth was as ardent as ever for his project of regaining jurisdiction over the New Hampshire grants. That is why his actions within the next few months became puzzling to others, especially to Jacob Bayley. Bayley had received a grant west of the Connecticut from Benning Wentworth in 1763, and had been one of the founders of Newbury just across from Haverhill. He had helped Eleazar Wheelock in his search for a site for Dartmouth College and, though himself supporting Haverhill, had adquiesced in the choice of Hanover. As a holder of a New Hampshire title west of the river, Bayley understandably was disturbed by the building controversy over the grants. In January, 1771, he told Wheelock that he was writing to Governor Wentworth, but admitted that he was confused as to which side
it would be best to support. John Wentworth convinced him that his best interests lay with New Hampshire and within a few months Bayley was circulating a petition in the Connecticut valley that asked for reinstatement to the jurisdiction of Wentworth's province. Late in August, shortly after sending the Council's report to Hillsborough, Wentworth and a small party traveled to the Connecticut for the first commencement of Dartmouth College. The Governor took this opportunity to call on Bayley at his home in Newbury to again urge his assistance and to assure him of his own unremitting effort to regain the grants for New Hampshire. Thus Bayley was shocked when several months later he received a letter from the Governor saying that he could no longer lend support to efforts to regain New Hampshire jurisdiction over the region in dispute, and that Bayley should make the best possible terms with New York. 43

Not willing to accept such a sudden reversal without any explanation, Bayley rode to Portsmouth where, he later recounted, Governor Wentworth "rather seemed to put me off, and discover a good deal of coldness and indifference, the reason of which I could not learn." He thought he had learned, though, after traveling to New York. There he was shown a letter that John Wentworth had written to William Tryon, Governor of New York since the previous July. In the letter Wentworth explained how his uncle Benning, who had died in October, 1770, had reserved for himself 500 acres in every town that he granted. Because this was deemed improper it was not considered that the former Governor had any rightful title to the lots. John then asked Governor Tryon the favor of granting to him those
lots reserved by Benning west of the Connecticut River which had not yet been regranted. Here then, in front of Bayley's own eyes, was the answer. Wentworth had sold out the proprietors and settlers west of the river, people who were counting on New Hampshire's leadership, in order to further his own personal interests. Incensed at what seemed John Wentworth's callous opportunism, Bayley traveled up and down the river telling the story to others.44

It is not surprising that this letter caused suspicion, especially as John had bothered to inform Tryon that on his uncle's death he had received no inheritance. He later defended his action by noting special precautions he had taken not to yield any land claims to New York.45 Nevertheless, merely by applying to New York for a grant, he had admitted to that province's rightful jurisdiction over the land he was supposed to be attempting to get back for New Hampshire. If the Governor of New Hampshire was willing to take conveyance of land under New York authority, how could anyone else reasonably argue against New York jurisdiction? This action was of potentially great damage to the New Hampshire cause and John Wentworth must have known that. It seems clear that he had changed his position in regard to the question of jurisdiction over the land west of the Connecticut.

Nevertheless, Bayley's interpretation of the Governor's shift probably was not accurate. For one thing, nearly a year after Benning Wentworth's death John was still pushing hard for renewed jurisdiction over the New Hampshire grants. More to the point, it seems highly unlikely that Wentworth would
have given up the huge advantage to be gained by the addition to New Hampshire of this large and valuable area of land, merely for personal acquisition of an uncertain number of widely scattered five-hundred acre lots. The reason for his about-face more likely lies in a report from the Board of Trade to the Privy Council dated June 6, 1771, which Wentworth probably received sometime in early Autumn. Not willing to wait any longer for the promised report from the New Hampshire Council, and desiring to answer New York's request to grant lands to soldiers under the Parliamentary Act of 1763, the Board was proceeding with its recommendations for settling the dispute. The news was good for those actually settled under a New Hampshire grant. They were to have full title to their land with no further payments to be required by New York. The news for speculative holders of unimproved New Hampshire grants and for New Hampshire itself, however, was not as favorable. These persons, it was suggested, should be given a date by which they must obtain a title from New York or lose claim to their land, which in no individual case should exceed 500 acres. This meant that there was no inclination in England to change jurisdiction from New York to New Hampshire. John doubtless realized there was little hope left for this eventuality, and that it would behove everyone, including himself, to make the best deal they could with New York.

A question that needs to be asked, however, is why Wentworth did not inform Bayley of this news when he urged him to seek confirmation from New York. It appears now, that though John Wentworth no longer expected to gain reversion of
jurisdiction to New Hampshire, he believed there still was a small chance that it might happen. The Board of Trade only recommended; the Privy Council made the final decision. He would not want word to get to England that he had abandoned hope of regaining jurisdiction, for that might easily kill what little chance remained. John was not totally resigned to defeat. Although he seems to have given up active participation in the dispute by late 1771, he still refused New York's requests for a public statement renouncing his interest west of the Connecticut, and his letters to England continued to reflect hope that New Hampshire might yet be awarded jurisdiction over that area. There seems little reason to doubt the spirit of his statement to Wheelock in the spring of 1773, that he had always favored re-annexation of the area and "my endeavors are not now wanting to that point." He admitted, however, that he had told Bayley that he "saw no prospect of success." Shortly after this he learned that his assessment of the situation had been correct. An Order in Council of March 5, 1773, in reference to charges made against the conduct of New York by the New Hampshire Council, stated that those charges, serious as they might be, should not "weigh in the scale of Consideration against those principles of true policy and sound Wisdom, which appear to have dictated the proposition of making the River Connecticut the boundary Line between the two Colonies, and therefore the said Lords Commissioners cannot advise any alteration to be made in the measure."47

For John Wentworth and for New Hampshire the issue of jurisdiction over the lands west of the Connecticut River was
closed. Unfortunately for New York, the sentiment of Ethan Allen, his cousin Remember Baker, and other speculators in New Hampshire grants, was not similar. The requirement of paying fees to New York for their huge accumulations of land meant ruin to these men, thus their continued violent resistance to New York authority was not surprising. Within only a few years the contest between New Hampshire and New York for this area would be looked on by both provinces as an exercise in futility. Seemingly exemplifying a growing spirit within the colonies as a whole, the independent frontiersmen between the Connecticut and Hudson Rivers successfully struggled to create a province of their own.

The episode of the disputed New Hampshire grants was another aspect of John Wentworth's dedication to the development of his province, at the expense of another if need be. His assertion that acquisition of the region would in the long-run mean much more to New Hampshire than New York was unquestionably true, and he showed himself a hardheaded and shrewd politician in attempting to gain that end. He clearly was working against New York authority, New York knew it, and he knew that New York knew it. Yet he never let down his guise of completely detached innocence, and never provided New York authorities with anything substantive that could be used against him. His seeming shift of position in order to obtain New York lands for himself and his family was not an act of self-centered aggrandizement as Jacob Bayley wanted to believe. It merely was a practical attempt to make the best of a deteriorating situation. For a period of time, on a very low key, he skillfully played both
sides of the dispute. He solicited lands from New York, an action he likely felt would lead Governor Tryon to believe that he no longer had any quarrel with New York jurisdiction, and at the same time continued to support the cause to get the entire region back for New Hampshire.  

Although his quest was ultimately unsuccessful, John Wentworth's efforts in this affair may have been very important for himself and for his province. It was believed in the colony that New Hampshire's general tranquility and loyalty to the Crown during the recent troubles over the revenue acts might be an inducement in England to return the land west of the Connecticut. With such a prize at stake, there would be little incentive for antagonizing the home government. Wentworth's long suppression of a petition to the King for redress of the trade duties doubtless was not unrelated to the dispute with New York, and the question of the grants west of the Connecticut River cannot be overlooked as a factor in the continuing harmony of New Hampshire.

Fortunately for John Wentworth, no new tensions had arisen in relations with Britain to disturb that harmony, and the calm that had settled over the colonies following the repeal of the Townshend duties continued on into 1772. By this time Wentworth House at Wolfeboro was substantially completed and John and his new wife were spending more and more time there. Although she attempted to make the best of the situation, Frances Wentworth apparently was not well suited to the rigors and isolation of this life in the country. She dreaded the trips between Portsmouth and Wolfeboro which she felt her constitution was not up to. When finally at the new house she
was left alone for long periods of time to entertain herself as best she could. The Governor, on the other hand, seemed to thrive on the outdoor life and the persistent activity demanded by his estate. If he was not busy inspecting his property or directing workmen in various projects of construction or cultivation, he was pursuing one of his favorite pastimes, collecting unusual specimens of North American fauna and flora to send to Rockingham in England. In February, 1772, John shipped the Marquis a buck moose which, he hoped, would eventually mate with the doe he had sent to Wentworth-Woodhouse the previous summer. He had had a pair at that time but his gamekeeper, much to John's chagrin, had tied the male to a tree with a rope around its neck. As he explained to Rockingham, the moose "sprung with such violence that it stove in his Skull and he dropped dead instantly." With the moose John also sent some sugar made from maple tree sap and to Lady Rockingham, Frances gave two pairs of wild birds. Similar to a pheasant but slightly smaller, they had been captured in a remote section of New Hampshire, "the only part of America they are known in" John claimed. He was confident that they too could be bred on Rockingham's Yorkshire estate.50

The year 1772 was good for Wolfeboro because until early fall Wentworth had little else to be concerned with but routine matters of government. At that time, however, trouble loomed up again, not as a result of precipitating events from the outside as before, but rather from within New Hampshire and aimed directly at the Governor himself. On August 7, the Earl of Hillsborough wrote to Wentworth enclosing a notice from the
Board of Trade notifying the Governor of serious charges lodged against him in England by a member of his own Council, Peter Livius. Wentworth was instructed to respond to each of the accusations, collect official documents and depositions to defend his case and, because Livius was in England, see to it that his supporters in New Hampshire were encouraged to do the same. Although distressing, this news undoubtedly did not come as a complete surprise to John Wentworth. Peter Livius had for some time been troublesome for those in power in New Hampshire, and when he left the province the previous spring without giving notice, John wrote to Hillsborough asking that Livius be replaced on the Council. Wentworth had at that time described Livius as a man who would be a "perpetual Source of Confusion, Disorder and Disobedience in any Part of North America."51

Peter Livius, two years younger than John Wentworth, had been born in Portugal the son of a German father and an Irish mother. Schooled in England, he there married a daughter of John Tufton Mason, hereditary claimant to the Mason grant in New Hampshire until he sold it in the 1740's. Anna Elizabeth Mason had been raised in Portsmouth and there Livius moved in the early sixties with the apparent intention of overseeing the remaining Mason holdings, making his own fortune, and joining the local aristocracy. His eye immediately fell on the royal mast trade which he correctly perceived as the most lucrative business in New Hampshire. When he discovered that the Wentworths had an impenetrable lock on masting in New England, his resentment of the family and its associates grew.
When Benning Wentworth came under scrutiny by the home government, Livius tried to convince his father-in-law, John Tufton Mason, to seek the position. In 1765, after first expressing his support of George Meserve, the appointed stamp distributor, Livius turned completely about on the arrival of Meserve's commission and joined the popular clamor against the government writing a pamphlet in support of opposition to the Stamp Act. In that same year, bypassing the Governor completely, he managed through his connections in England to procure an appointment to the New Hampshire Council where, he had earlier claimed, he would "oppose the Conduct of the Governor and Council in General." 52

Livius was true to his word. In 1768 in a dispute between the Assembly and the Council over powder money collected on foreign shipping, he sided with the Assembly expressing his dissent from the decision of the Council. In 1771, however, came a more serious break with the Governor and Council. Benning Wentworth had died the previous fall and in March, John Wentworth asked the Council to consider the validity of the old Governor's numerous 500 acre grants to himself and the advisability of resuming and regranting these lands. On the nineteenth, the Council returned that it did not believe that these conveyances by Benning Wentworth to himself carried rightful titles and that the Governor should regrant these lots. The only dissenting vote was that of Peter Livius. One week later he produced a detailed list of reasons for his action, among which were his claims that Benning's grants were indeed valid, and that many purchasers of those lands who had made substantial improvements
would be wrongfully dispossessed. The crux of the matter, however, lay in Livius' charge that John Wentworth wanted the lands for himself. Extenuating circumstances did exist that could be construed as evidence in support of Livius' accusation. During Benning Wentworth's last years it apparently was the general belief that his estate would go to his family, in particular to his brothers but with his nephew and successor, John Wentworth, receiving a major share. When Benning's will was disclosed following his death, however, it was discovered that all had been left to his young wife, Martha Wentworth. The people of Portsmouth were surprised. John Hurd reported to a friend that "it engages the conversation of everybody--and doubtless chagrins many--I won't say who--but our good little governor, who best merited, bears all like a hero." John Wentworth had, in fact, been anticipating a substantial portion of his uncle's estate, but his and others' expectations had been thwarted, he confided to Rockingham, by a mutual relation, one Michael Wentworth. Colonel Michael Wentworth, a retired army officer, had come to New Hampshire in 1767, the same year that John Wentworth returned as Governor. Bachelors and friends, it was only natural that the two men should share accommodations. John had a large house with more than enough rooms for himself, and Michael lived there with him until a few months before the Governor's marriage. When Michael moved out, John worried that he had "attached himself to some very wretched low people," but the Governor need not have been concerned on that account for Michael Wentworth had
ingratiated himself with some very substantial people, namely Martha and Benning Wentworth. As John was later to recount, Michael "grew more and more attach'd and assiduous about the poor infirm old Gent. and his young Wife," moved in with them, "took charge of all the Keys and was shortly the Man of the house." His purpose soon became apparent to John when Benning Wentworth, "Worn out with Age and domestic vexation," after viewing the destruction of his original will was prevailed on to draw up a new one completely disinheriting all of his family and naming his wife, Martha Wentworth, as sole beneficiary. Shortly after Benning's death, Michael Wentworth took out a license to marry the old Governor's widow.55

Peter Livius prefaced his dissent from the Council in March, 1771, with the statement that the Governor had "desird the advice and consent of Council for the granting to his own use thro' the intervention of other Persons, all those Lands that were granted or reserved to the late Governor." Livius later claimed that he suggested the impropriety of this action to the Governor who quickly brushed such a notion aside, and that his dissent was never entered in the Council Journal and not placed on file for over a year. John Wentworth responded that he had asked the Council "about granting these lands to such of his Majesty's subjects as would improve and settle" them, and that "No question was ever put to the Council, about granting these lands to" himself. The Council vigorously corroborated the Governor's rebuttal, claimed that Livius' dissent was placed on file on March 26, the day he produced it, and explained that it was not copied into the journal because "no Reasons
of Dissent had ever been so recorded at length" and that "the Council would not have acted inconsistent with their Duty in rejecting it entirely because the Allegations contained therein were not True." Secretary Theodore Atkinson provided separate testimony vouching for the veracity of John Wentworth's interpretation of what had transpired between himself and the Council.  

In its simplest terms, the issue was a matter of the word of Peter Livius, whose reputation was none too savory by this time, against that of the Governor, Council, and Secretary of the province. From this alone the evidence would seem to favor John Wentworth. Also to be considered, though, should be Wentworth's main concern for New Hampshire, that of seeing it settled as rapidly as possible. Within that context, his argument that he wanted to reclaim these unimproved lands so that they could be granted for profitable settlement is convincing. Also, Livius' claim that Wentworth was going to obtain the land for himself by granting it to others did not hold up. A number of the new grantees of Benning's old lands made sworn statements that John Wentworth had never solicited their aid, that they had had no dealings with him, and that he had no interest in their land.  

Yet in spite of this seemingly unassailable case, there are disturbing doubts about Wentworth's story that refuse to be eradicated. To go back only a few years, in defending Benning Wentworth in England while his uncle was still Governor, John had written that he "failed to find the impropriety" of Benning's grants of land to himself. Within a few months of his uncle's death, however, he seemed eager to have the Council agree with
him that these grants were indeed improper, having been made by the Governor to himself, and that as such they conveyed no valid title. This may have been an honest change of opinion, but it looks suspiciously like a case of opportunism prompted by Wentworth's desire to reclaim these lands. Although this does not necessarily indicate that John wanted Benning's plots for himself, it must also be remembered that it was at this time that he was attempting to obtain his uncle's remaining lands west of the Connecticut River. Most damaging to John Wentworth's testimony that he had no personal designs on Benning's estate, however, is a statement he made to Rockingham in a letter in which he made no attempt to hide his unhappiness with the changing of the will. "By mere accident," John wrote, "I found . . . that part of the Estate had never been convey'd legally to the old Gent. and fell of course to me." This could hardly refer to anything but Benning Wentworth's land grants to himself and is a clear indication that John believed those grants belonged to him. Thus, while there seems good reason to believe John Wentworth's explanation that he wanted only to regrant these lands, we cannot positively know his intent in the matter.

There also is no way to know if Livius at this time fixed on the idea of raising serious charges in England against the Governor. Wentworth's activities concerning the resumption and regranting of his uncle's and, by implication, other lands, were central to those charges, but Livius did not file them for more than a year, in July, 1772. During that year he did publicly circulate copies of his dissent "in a manner," as
Secretary Atkinson later complained, "Injurious and Derogatory to the Honor of the Governor and Council." This may have been preparation for prosecuting his case. Had Livius not yet determined on this action, another incident that occurred in the interim probably was a deciding factor in convincing him to pursue it. As an Inferior Court justice, Peter Livius was known for his blatant partisanship in cases involving friends, whether plaintiffs, defendants, or attorneys. In 1771, when word had been received of the approval of the act to divide the province into counties and it became necessary to issue new commissions for positions on the bench, Livius found that the Governor had not renewed his judgeship. This was all the impetus he needed to forge ahead. Livius sailed for England in the spring of 1772 and on July 9 filed his charges with the Board of Trade.60

In addition to the complaints that the Governor and Council had prematurely and without due process resumed and regranted lands, and that Wentworth had attempted to obtain Benning Wentworth's lands for himself, both actions allegedly involving the dispossession of rightful holders of these lands, Peter Livius made other accusations. Harking back to the powder-money dispute between Assembly and Council in 1768, he stated that the Council refused to provide an account of these presumably public funds and denied him the right of entering his dissent. Livius accused the Governor of attempting to obtain a desired judicial opinion by repeatedly changing judges in a court case in which he, Wentworth, had a special interest. Pointing out that the New Hampshire Council was composed almost
entirely of Wentworth's relations, Livius charged that body
and the Governor with collusion in a conspiracy against justice.
As proof of Wentworth's attempt to hide these unseemly actions,
Livius drew attention to the fact that the journals of the
Council had never been forwarded to Whitehall by the Governor
as his instructions required. The disgruntled Councillor even
complained that he had been subjected to personal abuse by
Wentworth. 61

Late in October, John Wentworth informed the Earl of
Dartmouth, President of the Board of Trade, that he had received
the Board's notification of the charges against him and was,
with all requisite haste, collecting the necessary information
to clear himself of these unjust accusations. He indicated to
Dartmouth that he felt the Earl of Hillsborough, in so easily
accepting the complaints of a disreputable figure such as Peter
Livius, was again treating him with an unnecessarily heavy hand
and in the process only further undermining the authority of
governors in America. In mid-December John expressed his
frustration over Hillsborough's conduct more directly to the
Marquis of Rockingham. It seemed, he wrote, that Hillsborough
"preferred the unsupported Complaint of a discontented single
Man, ruin'd by his own folly and absconding that instant from
his Creditors, to the representations of a Provincial Gov'r
who but a few weeks before was honor'd with the Royal approba-
tion." John was, in fact, placing much of his hope for
vindication on his laudable record of keeping opposition to
royal government at a minimum in New Hampshire. He also expressed
confidence in obtaining fair treatment from Dartmouth, who in
the mid-sixties had been close to the Rockingham Whigs, and
who now had replaced Hillsborough as Colonial Secretary. 62

Wentworth told Rockingham that he had completed his
defense and was sending his private secretary, Thomas Macdonogh,
to England to present his case. Macdonogh, long a member of
the English Customs Service, had come over with the American
Commissioners to Boston. For nearly a year, however, he had
been serving Wentworth as personal secretary. On December 18,
John wrote letters to Dartmouth and to the Board of Trade
introducing Macdonogh who, he explained, would present his
replies to the charges and the numerous depositions collected
in his behalf. He had, he explained, made every effort to
give the supporters of Peter Livius an opportunity to obtain
depositions in his behalf, but none had been forthcoming. On
the twentieth of December, 1772, Macdonogh, documents in hand,
boarded the Dolphin and set sail for England. Several days
later the Council drew up its own memorial to the Board of
Trade refuting Livius' claims. Theodore Atkinson forwarded
this to Barlow Trescothick for presentation at the Board. 63

Although John Wentworth had heard a rumor that he was
to be removed from office, he gave it no credit and was confident
of his complete exoneration from charges he believed to be
"groundless and of no import." He had good reason to be
optimistic. In addition to strong denials by himself and the
Council, Wentworth sent copies of a number of letters from the
Crown expressing approbation of his conduct, especially in
regard to his successful peacekeeping endeavors in New Hampshire
and his strenuous efforts to enforce British forest laws. Also
forwarded were copies of the missing Council records with an
explanation by Secretary Atkinson that since they had not
customarily been sent since the time of Benning Wentworth,
this practice merely was continued under the new Governor.
Most important, however, were the numerous depositions collected
by Wentworth from some forty of whom he termed "the first
characters in this part of the Province."³⁴

These included attestations by members of the Council
that no land had ever been regranted on which improvements had
been made and that due process had always been followed in the
resumption of any lands. A number of grantees of Benning
Wentworth's resumed lots declared that John Wentworth had no
interest whatsoever in their lands. In response to the charge
that the Governor changed judges in a case in order to obtain
a desired verdict, New Hampshire's Attorney General, Samuel
Livermore, and several of the judges who were involved asserted
that the appointment of special judges was a common practice,
that the reason they were appointed in this instance stemmed
from another case pending at the same time, and that Governor
Wentworth had never mentioned the case to them at all. Adding
weight to this part of Wentworth's defense was the testimony
of Hunking Wentworth, the Governor's uncle but representing the
opposing side in the court case, who swore that he knew of no
attempt to influence the judges and added that he had been
completely satisfied with the administration of justice in
this instance. In addition, there were depositions attesting
to Livius' unethical business activities and his unworthiness
as a judge. Several Congregational ministers wrote in defense
of their Anglican Governor and even John Sullivan of Durham and Meshech Weare of Hampton Falls, soon to be leaders in the movement against royal authority in New Hampshire, signed depositions in behalf of Wentworth. Numerous unsolicited declarations of confidence in the administration of John Wentworth were also made by individuals, towns, and at least one county, and sent to England.65

In the face of this massing of evidence, Peter Livius could do little for he had few supporters in New Hampshire. Among his few friends were the Langdon brothers, Woodbury and John, successful merchants but outside the Wentworth circle. However, when Woodbury Langdon and Michael Wentworth, supposedly Livius' agents in the province, were informed by the Attorney General that they were to collect depositions in his behalf, "they declared that they had nothing to do with the affair," and left their friend to rely primarily on his own rebuttal of the Governor's defense. Thus there was much reason for Wentworth to be encouraged about his prospects in the case, even more so when he considered who was helping him in England. Thomas Macdonogh possessed qualities he admired—"an excellent understanding, most inflexible probity and inviolable . . . prudence"—and he had complete confidence in his secretary to coordinate the measures necessary for a successful defense. The Marquis of Rockingham, though out of power, was a man of not inconsiderable influence and John knew that he could be counted on to do what he could to help. Barlow Trecothick was still New Hampshire's agent and could be expected to bring his considerable political skill to the aid of the Governor.
Paul Wentworth, for whom John had finally obtained a seat on the New Hampshire Council although he had never been back to America, was also engaged in the battle against Livius. On the first day of February, 1773, Barlow Trecothick wrote to Dartmouth and to John Pownall, Undersecretary for the American Department, introducing Thomas Macdonogh whom "I think," he told Pownall, carries "conclusive Refutation of the several Charges preferred against" John Wentworth. "The General Esteem Governor Wentworth has acquired by the Rectitude of his Conduct, during the course of his Administration, and the frequent Expressions of Approbation from his superiors here," Trecothick went on to tell Dartmouth, "are strongly in his favour." New Hampshire's agent expressed his intention to attend the hearings because, as he exclaimed, "the Governor seems to Me to have been very greatly traduced." Macdonogh in the meantime was arranging the depositions and other materials to make the best possible case while keeping Rockingham apprised of his progress. In April the Marquis busied himself obtaining a copy of a legal opinion presented in 1752 by Sir Dudley Rider and William Murray, now Lord Mansfield, respectively Attorney and Solicitor General, expressing conditions under which land might be resumed and regranted and seemingly supporting the activities of Governor Wentworth. By the time Macdonogh presented the materials in defense of Wentworth to Dartmouth at the end of April, the Governor could confidently state that Livius' charges against him were in England "now known to be Calumny only."
It is not difficult, then, to imagine the shock of Wentworth and his friends on learning of the Board of Trade's opinion of May 10, 1773, that in spite of the continued "peace and prosperity" fostered in New Hampshire under the governorship of John Wentworth, "the instances of the maladministration with which he has been charged" made him not a "fit person to be entrusted with your Majesty's interests in the important station he now holds." This was a recommendation for dismissal! The substantive considerations of the decision were that Wentworth had resumed and regranted lands without proper notice, due process, or presentation of evidence, that there was not justification for reclaiming the lands Benning Wentworth had left to his widow, and that the Governor had repeatedly changed judges in a court case in which he had an interest. The 1752 opinion of Sir Dudley Rider and William Murray was dismissed as not applicable in the present case.68

John Wentworth later blamed Trecothick for not adequately supporting him at this crucial time. However, there probably was little more the agent could have done and Wentworth's criticism appears unjustified. Nevertheless, the decision of the Board of Trade—accepting the word of one man against that of a popular and successful Governor, his Council, and numerous supporters—is difficult to explain, especially in light of the fact that there were no complaints from any victims of Wentworth's alleged land-grabbing operations. Livius' claim that these people were too poor to draw up depositions was certainly weak. Important influencing factors in the Board's pronouncement seem to have been the preponderance of Wentworth
relations sitting on the Provincial Council, and the fact that the Council records had not been forwarded while John Wentworth had been in office. These made Livius' otherwise unsubstantiated charges look suspiciously true. One cannot escape the conclusion, however, that this should not have been enough to overturn the mass of evidence in Wentworth's favor. The Earl of Dartmouth, President of the Board, apparently felt this way which probably explains his absence when the opinion was given. He could not support the decision, but likewise could not come out openly for Wentworth because it would associate him too closely with the Rockinghamites who were in opposition to Government. It is possible that Livius at this time had more influence in England than Wentworth.

As disturbing and disheartening as the Board's report was, John Wentworth's friends in England knew they must not give up. A month later, early in June, Macdonogh, Paul Wentworth, and Sir Thomas Wentworth of Bretton Hall in Yorkshire, an influential relation and Wentworth's acquaintance from his sojourn in England, petitioned George III for a review of the decision by the Privy Council. On June 24, John Pownall informed the three that their appeal had been granted and six days later the matter was referred to a committee of the Privy Council. No stone was to be left unturned this time. Rockingham was especially zealous in his efforts, obtaining the services of two of the most prominent and able lawyers in the Kingdom, John Skynner and John Lee. Skynner was a Member of Parliament and Lee, a man of strong whig principles, had recently served as counsel for those who had sent John Wilkes to the Commons.
Early in July Macdonogh met with these men in Skynner's chambers at Lincoln's Inn to provide the necessary documents and help coordinate the effort in behalf of the Governor. Rockingham himself remained in the background for he knew that, rather than a help, his obvious presence would be detrimental to the case. The Rockingham faction was in opposition to the Ministry and the Marquis realized that John Wentworth could not be exonerated without the approbation of the Ministers. He was particularly intent on having Wentworth cleared because he had recommended his appointment as Governor. He also believed, though, that the Board of Trade had made a mistake and that John Wentworth had been wronged. "The more I look into the matter," he remarked determinedly, "the eagerer I grow in Governoʃr Wentworth's conduct, and stamping it as illegal—arbitrary etc. etc. are deep wounds to a man's private character." Rockingham was interested enough in Wentworth's vindication to put off a remonstrance against a bill before the Irish Parliament, a bill already approved by the Privy Council, until after a decision was made in the Governor's case.71

Counsel was set to be heard for Wentworth on July 22, and for Livius one week later. Interest in the hearings ran high in London, not only among visiting colonists but also Englishmen. The Lords postponed their summer recess and it was reported that the presentation on the twenty-second for the Governor was attended by a "crowded Audience; among thom many of the principal Gentry from all the American Provinces, and
from the West India Islands." Attorneys Skynner and Lee presented John Wentworth's case with voluminous documents, depositions, and witnesses. Among those ready to testify in the Governor's behalf were Daniel Sherburne, recently arrived from New Hampshire, Commodore Hood, with whom Wentworth had served on the special admiralty court in Boston in 1769, and John Williams, Inspector General of the Customs in North America. The great Pitt, himself, favored Wentworth's cause, but could not be prevailed upon to present his opinion to the Privy Council. On the twenty-ninth Livius had his turn. Rockingham later wrote to Wentworth that "It made great Impression on the Privy Council that no one joined Mr. Livius in giving Evidence against You." Livius did produce three depositions, but these were of questionable value. The rhetorical powers of one of his attorneys, however, impressed one observer enough to compare him with Pitt.

The case was extensively discussed in the London newspapers. One commentator filled three entire columns in support of Livius' position. An aspect that seemed particularly to fascinate Englishmen was the degree of Wentworth family control in New Hampshire. One "Americus" was stimulated to parody the situation in the form of an overheard conversation between a "Virginian" and a "New Hampshire Man" submitted to the Public Advertiser of July 29, 1773. "I think your Province is very little mentioned. I suppose you have very few People," began the Virginian. "Far otherwise I assure you," replied the New Hampshire Man. "Our Members are not much short of 100,000 white People."
"Virginian. Indeed! you surprise me. Pray what is the Reason you are so little talked of?

New Hamp. We are generally an orderly, quiet, well-disposed, loyal People; and yet we labour under Inconveniences and Oppressions that are peculiar to us.

Virginian. Pray what do they proceed from?

New Hamp. They proceed from the strong Family Combination which is in Possession of our Government.

Virginian. Pray who is your Governor?

New Hamp. John Wentworth, Esq;

Virginian. Wentworth! Is he any Relation of Lord Rockingham?

New Hamp. The Governor says he is; but we know better.

Virginian. Pray who is your Secretary?

New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Pray who is your Chief Justice?

New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Who is President of your Council?

New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Good now! And who is Clerk of your Council?
New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Who is the Governor's Deputy Surveyor?

New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Who is Colonel of your First Regiment?

New Hamp. Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law.

Virginian. Truly this Theodore Atkinson, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Father-in-law is well provided. Pray is he your Speaker too?

New Hamp. O! no: They say that is incompatible with the Presidentship of the Council; and so John Wentworth is Speaker.

Virginian. Why I thought John Wentworth was your Governor.

New Hamp. So he is.

Virginian. And Speaker too?

New Hamp. Yes indeed.

Virginian. Why sure you are not in earnest?

New Hamp. Indeed I am. John Wentworth is our Governor, and his Cousin J. Wentworth is our Speaker.

Virginian. Is that the Case? And how many of these Wentworths have you?

New Hamp. With us they are very prolific. We have even another John Wentworth, Uncle of the Governor, and Judge of our Common Pleas.
Virginian. Pray have you any more of these Wentworths?

New Hamp. Ad Infinitum. A John Wentworth is also our Judge of Probate.

Virginian. Good Lord! John Wentworths Judges! John Wentworth Governor! John Wentworth Speaker! I hope your Council is not to be Wentworth'd.

New Hamp. Pretty much so. First there is our President Theodore Atkinson, Esq; whom I have already told you of; then comes Daniel Warner, Esq; He is not the Governor's Relation; but all his three Sons married the Governor's First Cousins. The next is Mark Hunking Wentworth, Esq; the Governor's Father.

Virginian. What! his own Father!

New Hamp. Yes. Then comes Peter Livius, Esq; He is not the Governor's Relation; then is Geo. Jaffrey, Esq; our Treasurer, whose Father married the Governor's Aunt; then comes Daniel Warner's Son Jonathan, who married two of the Governor's First Cousins; then Daniel Rindge, Esq; the Governor's Uncle; then Daniel Rogers, Esq; the Governor's Uncle; then Daniel Pierce, Esq; the Governor's Uncle and Keeper of our Provincial Records.

Virginian. Are these all your Council?

New Hamp. Yes, for there are just now some Vacancies.
Virginian. Who has the Governor recommended to fill them?

New Hamp. Why there has been some Difficulty about it. There are Wentworths in Abundance; but as they do not all look like Gentlemen, the Governor, I have been told, has been obliged to recommend a Mr. Paul Wentworth, a Relation of his now in England, who has been out of the Province so long that he can know very little of its Concerns."

This shrewd description of nepotism and Wentworth family dominance in New Hampshire, carefully separated from the context in which this situation had developed, by implication clearly pronounced the Governor guilty. Much of this, however, was the legacy of Benning Wentworth. Theodore Atkinson, who sat on the Council before John Wentworth was born, had been collecting offices for years. Many of the Council, too, had not been chosen by the present Governor. Neither had he had anything to do with the selection of his cousin, whom he was not close to, as Speaker of the House. Nevertheless, there was little exaggeration in the facts as stated and the point was well made, undoubtedly by a friend of Peter Livius, or possibly by Livius himself. Fortunately for the Governor, this was not one of the central points in the case against him.

Following the hearing on Thursday, the twenty-ninth of July, Rockingham set out for Yorkshire where, at Wentworth-Woodhouse, he would await the decision. Thomas Macdonogh no doubt remained close by in London to receive the first possible word.
John Wentworth in the mean time, forced to leave his fate in the hands of a few friends three thousand miles across the ocean, could only busy himself nervously with local matters and be content with an occasional encouraging report from England. On August 26, the Committee presented its report to the Privy Council stating "That there is no foundation for any censure upon the said John Wentworth, Esq. Your Majesty's Governor of New Hampshire, for any of the charges contained in Mr. Livius's complaint against him." This, however, was not the final decision. That had to come from the Council as a whole. It should have been perfunctory, but as time passed and it did not appear, Wentworth's supporters became apprehensive. On September 21, Edmund Burke wrote Rockingham that "The Lords of the Council by their delay are laying up much disapprobation and unpopularity for their decision whenever it shall appear. Supposing it to be such as they gave your Lordship reason to expect ... from the Character of some of them and even from this delay I begin a little to doubt." Rockingham thought he knew which character on the Council was responsible. The Privy Council's "unanimous opinion is well known," he told the Duke of Portland at the end of September, "but by the Manoeuvres of Sir Fletcher Norton, who does not avow that he differs—the Report is kept back, he pretending that he must have Time to more fully consider it." The Marquis was indeed worried, for he had heard a rumor that the decision had been delayed to allow another charge to be made against the Governor, a legal machination which, he complained to Portland, "would not have been Suffered at the Old Baily."
Rockingham's fears were relieved, however, on October 8, when the King in Council upheld the committee's report and dismissed Peter Livius' charges against John Wentworth. The main factor in the decision was lack of evidence to support the complaint. Only slight censure of the Governor was implied by the pronouncement that the Provincial Council was in error in concluding that Benning Wentworth's grants to himself did not actually convey title to the land. Wentworth also was ordered from that point on to punctually forward official copies of the Council Journal. On the twelfth of October the Marquis informed Lady Rockingham that the "Governor is most honourably acquitted," and added with a touch of pride, "I own I feel a degree of triumph in it." At the end of the month Dartmouth sent Wentworth official notification of the decision, but of course by that time word of the acquittal was well on its way across the ocean. The sweet news of victory was undoubtedly soured somewhat by the accompanying rumor, which proved to be true, that Livius had convinced Dartmouth to appoint him Chief Justice of the province in place of Theodore Atkinson. An unwise move that could only have resulted in more dissention and increased turmoil in New Hampshire, it shortly was remedied by providing Livius a similar but more lucrative post in Quebec. There he returned where, within several years, he became involved in a controversy with Sir Guy Carlton, Governor of that province. For Wentworth nothing could have completely spoiled his sense of relief at this happy ending of his year-and-a-half ordeal of uncertainty and frustration. Beyond that there was a sense of justification and restored honor that came with his vindication
John's friends and supporters were so pleased that they gave a ball in his honor at the end of January, 1774, which, the local paper asserted, "did in Brilliancy and Elegance, far exceed any Thing of the Kind ever seen before in this Province."

The Livius affair could be interpreted as a sign of John Wentworth's weakness and vulnerability as Governor. On the contrary, however, it appears to have proved his strength and support in New Hampshire. It is true that enemies did come out, some for the first time, but no organized opposition appeared that was willing or able to mount a concerted attack on the Governor. No strong, well-coordinated faction developed with the aim of removing Wentworth from office. Adding emphasis to this fact is the apparent relative ease with which that end could have been accomplished. With his friends out of power, John Wentworth's position in England was not strong, a fact attested to by the original recommendation of the Board of Trade that he not be continued as Governor. Had there been a general desire to force him out, this would have been the ideal time. A limited campaign to collect depositions against Wentworth might have been all that was needed. Yet the best Livius could get was affidavits from three uninfluential people. Rockingham later told John that his enemies had done him a favor by not writing in support of Livius. There were a few people of note who opposed Wentworth and his family's entrenched dominance, but they were not organized, had no specific goals, no idea of someone to replace Wentworth, and were not willing to give evidence against him. Not only did John Wentworth have the support of the preponderance of the province's commercial
class, but his popularity at the grass-roots level left little adverse sentiment to be turned against him.

Three factors would be at work from this time on, however, that would make John Wentworth's position in New Hampshire increasingly difficult, and drive him and the people of his province farther and farther apart. First was the effect of the Livius case on his general outlook. The criticisms and admonitions of Hillsborough and the home government had irritated Wentworth before, and he had expressed his displeasure over this to Rockingham and others. Now, however, he had come face to face with the full power of Whitehall and had come within a whisker of losing his position. This experience had to have deeply impressed him and made him realize that he could not afford to make any mistakes. Right or wrong, the power was in London, and that fact he could not afford to take lightly. Too, he felt a debt to those who had helped him in England, especially to Rockingham who had appointed him and who had just expended so much effort to justify that appointment. John knew that he could not let Rockingham down or embarrass him in any way. He knew that he must do exactly what Whitehall expected of him. If the Livius affair did not make John Wentworth fearful, it could not have helped but make him more careful—careful not to do anything that might antagonize the British Government. This meant that he would be increasingly cautious and less willing to take an objective middle ground in any further dispute between England and the colonies. It meant that he would take a harder line on opposition to royal authority, and would provide any necessary assistance to ensure
that authority. John Wentworth would leave no reason to doubt that he was a worthy and loyal servant of the King. 79

A second factor, one accentuating this attitude of caution, was Wentworth's perception, as a result of the Livius episode, of enemies within New Hampshire. He first saw potential trouble among a group of unscrupulous land speculators in the vicinity of the Merrimack River. These men, he believed, thought they would profit from a general breakdown of authority in the province. As a result they were eager to help Livius in his attempts to unseat the Governor and they sought support among, as Wentworth termed them, the "poor, ignorant peasants." Describing this movement as "replete with disobedience, mischief, and levelling principles," Wentworth believed the common people were being enticed with greater political participation and, significantly, he linked it to the troubles that had been plaguing Massachusetts since the time of the Stamp Act. 80 Fortunately for the Governor, his apprehensions were not borne out. If there was such a threat from this quarter, it never developed and Peter Livius did not receive any support from the Merrimack River region.

More serious because more real was the enmity that surfaced nearer home. Hoping that the Livius case would draw any enemies into the open, Wentworth remained away from town at his Wolfeboro estate during the summer of 1773 and discreetly suppressed all news from England of his probable success. The scheme worked. At the end of August he confided to a friend: "Many have unexpectedly declared both for and against me." Among those he discovered against him were Dr. Hall Jackson,
a local physician, and Woodbury Langdon. John told Thomas Waldron that not only had he been the focus of a "torrent of obloquy," but that it had overflowed onto his servants and even his wife who bore it, he remarked, "with that resolution becoming her rank and name." The purported insults may have been related to a later accusation by Langdon that the Governor had been cuckolded.

Whatever the case, Wentworth felt threatened. The situation was made worse when he discovered that a number of important letters to him had been "clandestinely intercepted," proof indeed that people were plotting against him. Even after receiving word of his vindication by the Privy Council, Wentworth seems to have kept it quiet, probably to give his enemies hope and expose as many of them as possible. The Assembly finally had to send a committee to the Governor to request information as to the official determination of the case. Thus, for the first time, Wentworth must have felt a sense of uneasiness and estrangement within his province. He was confident that the great majority of people were on his side, but his realization now that there were persons, both known and unknown, who desired his removal, put him instinctively in a defensive attitude, ready to stand firm behind the authority of the Crown.

Nevertheless, John Wentworth's popularity was such that this trouble would have eventually receded into the background and become insignificant had it not been for a third, and most important, element effecting the relationship between him and the people of New Hampshire. That was the changing situation between the colonies and Great Britain. Since the repeal of
the Townshend duties in 1770 resistance to British authority had been minimal, tranquility prevailing generally throughout the colonies. The only trouble in New Hampshire resulted from the seizure of the brig Resolution in the fall of 1771, but that had been shortlived. In May, 1773, in response to a request from the Virginia House of Burgesses, the New Hampshire Assembly created a standing committee of correspondence to exchange information with the other colonies. The Burgesses were concerned with what seemed another violation of constitutional rights in a British proposal that offenders arrested for the destruction of a revenue cutter in Rhode Island be sent to England for trial. At the end of May, though, Wentworth prorogued the Assembly to January, 1774. After that nothing further was heard on the matter and peaceful conditions were not disturbed. This pattern of harmony and accord seemed seriously threatened in November, however, when John received disturbing news from his friend, Henry Caner, of "tumultuous riots mobs and Town Meetings" in Boston. Caner referred to actions taken by Boston's radicals in resistance to a new piece of British legislation.

In May, 1773, in an effort to aid the ailing East India Company, Parliament had granted the company the right to reship its tea to America with a full rebate of the duty it had paid on bringing the tea into Britain. This would allow the tea to be sold cheaply in America with the hope that volume would help the company make up some of its losses. The plan was based on the presumption that the colonists would not object to paying the three pence per pound duty, the only one of the
Townshend duties that had not been repealed, in order to buy cheap tea. Some in Parliament disagreed, including Barlow Trescothick who offered that the only way to guarantee consumption in the colonies was to remove the duty. Lord North's Ministry, however, was not willing to give up this last assertion of Parliament's right to tax the American colonies. The result was the Tea Act of 1773. 84

Understandably, there was little immediate reaction in the colonies. Nothing was blatantly obnoxious about the Tea Act, in fact it was not aimed directly at the colonies. It was an attempt to bail the East India Company out of its financial difficulties, and on the surface it looked as though it would be advantageous for America, providing the colonies with cheaper tea. On September 29, however, a letter in a Philadelphia newspaper pointed out, contrary to what some people seemed to believe, the Townshend tea duty had not been repealed by the Tea Act and that if the tea was landed and sold, no matter how low the price, a precedent would be set for unconstitutional Parliamentary taxation of the colonies. The writer, a colonist in London, urged Americans to "convince Lord North that they are not yet ready to have the yoke of slavery riveted about their necks and send back the tea whence it came." This warning was not ignored and the cry for resistance soon spread throughout the colonies. In Boston the whigs vowed not to allow any East India tea to be sold in that town and threatened violence to the consignees if they did not resign. 85

Henry Caner reported this to Wentworth, but the New Hampshire Governor soon had troubles of his own for his province
was not isolated from the rising sentiment against the Tea Act. On December 12, a notice appeared in Portsmouth of a town meeting to be held on the sixteenth to consider necessary measures concerning the importation of East India tea. At that meeting on December 16, eleven resolves were approved proclaiming the unconstitutionality of the Townshend tea duty and the determination of the people of Portsmouth not to allow any tea to be landed or sold. A local committee of correspondence was created and the resolves were forwarded to the other major towns in the province. Within a short time Dover, Newcastle, Haverhill, Exeter, and other towns issued resolves of their own and by early 1774, opposition to British policy was more widespread in New Hampshire than it had ever been before.86

John Wentworth was disturbed. He wrote Dartmouth: "It was utterly impossible to prevent the people from these measures. The unwearied applications from Boston communicated the Flame here ... which had before run thro' all the other Colonies." He was convinced, however, that this new problem would not have arisen had not Peter Livius "spread reports and publications against the stability of the Governor and Council." Wentworth was under the illusion that the trouble in New Hampshire was related principally to the ferment Livius had raised against him. Woodbury Langdon, however, one of Livius' most influential backers, had voted against the Portsmouth tea resolves. The Governor was mistaken in believing that, but for the Livius episode, his province could have remained isolated from these new disturbances. He did not realize that the current
difficulties for royal government in New Hampshire were not primarily of the making of his enemies from the Livius affair. They were, rather, the result of a much larger problem. John Wentworth was soon made aware of that fact for on December 16, 1773, an event took place in another colony that proved to be of far greater consequence to him than the resolves passed that day in Portsmouth. That evening a mob numbering close to a thousand, some fitted out in Indian garb complete with blankets and tomahawks, descended on Griffin's Wharf in Boston, boarded the ship Dartmouth, and heaved nearly £10,000 worth of East India tea into the harbor.
NOTES

CHAPTER VIII


3 *New Hampshire Gazette*, April 13, 1770.


5 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, April 12, 1770, Public Record Office, C.0.5/937.

6 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, April 12, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/937; Zobel, *Boston Massacre*, 215.


9 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Oct. 28 and Sept. 20, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/930.

10 *NHSP*, 7:274, 276.

12 Charles W. Akers, "New Hampshire's 'Honorary' Lieutenant Governor: John Temple and the American Revolution," Historical New Hampshire, 30 (Summer, 1975): 85-88; Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, 6th Ser. 9 (1897): 236-38. Wentworth also took this opportunity to send with Temple information both for the Earl of Hillsborough and Edmund Burke. See Wentworth to Hillsborough, Nov. 4, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/930, and to Burke, Nov. 18, 1770, Wentworth-Woodhouse Muniments, Burke Papers, 174.

13 New Hampshire Gazette, Mar. 1, 1771.

14 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Nov. 15, 1771, PRO, C.0.5/930. See also NHSP, 18:606-07; Adams, Annals, 233; Mayo, John Langdon, 38-40.

15 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Nov. 2, 1770, WWM, Rl-1321.

16 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, July 23, 1771, WWM, Rl-1383.

17 The Marquis of Rockingham to Wentworth, Mar. 9, 1771, WWM, Wentworth Correspondence.


19 Ibid., 87. Optimism about the potential of the region between the Connecticut and Hudson Rivers was borne out by the growth in population between 1763 and 1776 from approximately 120 families to 20,000 people. See Charles E. Clark, The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610-1763 (New York, 1970), 354.


NHSP, 10:215-17, and 18:587-88.


Wardner, Birthplace of Vermont, 132; Wentworth to Nathaniel Rogers, Jan. 13, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 177.

Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, July 10, 1769, PRO, C.O.5/936; Wardner, Birthplace of Vermont, 137; Wentworth to Jared Ingersoll, Feb. 3, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 190.

Wardner, Birthplace of Vermont, 133-36. The mast-liner and Granger are quoted on 133 and 136.


Jones, Vermont, 171-74.

Wentworth to Jared Ingersoll, April 10, 1769, Letter Book no. 1, 220-21; Wentworth to Judge Morris, May 5, 1769, Ibid., 235; Wentworth to John Tabor Kempe, June 24, July 21, 1769, Ibid., 243, 257; Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, July 10, 1769, PRO, C.O.5/936.

Jones, Vermont, 195; Wardner, Birthplace of Vermont, 108-09, 118-19. It might be questioned here whether Wentworth deliberately sought to trap the Deans in illegal cutting in order to use them in his efforts to regain jurisdiction for New Hampshire over the region disputed with New York. Dean later claimed that he only wanted to cut the timber so he could cultivate his land. According to his testimony, in spite of going to see Wentworth himself and repeated promises by the Governor's deputies that they would come and survey his land, no one ever came. Was this an attempt by Wentworth to goad Dean into unlawful cutting and then catch him by surprise? On consideration of all the evidence, this conclusion appears unlikely. The failure of the deputies to show up on Dean's land was undoubtedly more the result of a rigorous schedule.
than of any preconceived scheme. Too, there is little doubt that Dean was in the lumber business. He and his sons had moved to Windsor with lumbering in mind and they had made large contracts with dealers in Massachusetts. When Dean went to see Wentworth, it was to have himself made a deputy surveyor, in which case he would be able to cut trees of any size with impunity. Further, the story that he wanted to cut merely to clear his land turned out to be a bold-faced lie when it was disclosed that most of the trees he had felled were on someone else's land. (See Wardner, 107-18, 131-32, 135.) The Deans were guilty and everyone involved in the case, whether they favored New Hampshire or New York, knew it. Given John Wentworth's deep concern for enforcing the mast laws, there can be little doubt that he was at least as concerned with stopping the Deans' illegal cutting as with the broader implications of the case for the New Hampshire-New York land dispute.

33See affidavits of Simon Stevens, Samuel Wells, and John Kelley in O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, 4:692, 698, 705. The petition that circulated in the towns of Westminster and Rockingham is printed on 672-75.


35O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, 4:626-33; C. M. Hough, ed., Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty of the Province of New York and in the Court of Admiralty of the State of New York, 1715-1788 (New Haven, 1925), 227-33; John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Oct. 22, 1770, PRO, C.O.5/227; Wardner, Birthplace of Vermont, 117-39. Wells and Grout were staunch supporters of New York and earlier had attempted to help the Deans escape from Wentworth's deputies. The Governor developed a strong dislike for both men and for some time attempted to have sanctions taken against them. Finding no sympathy among New York officials he pursued this end in England. In his letter of October 22, 1770, to Hillsborough, John described Grout as a "petty fogging Lawyer ... of deservedly infamous character," and, after explaining Wells' obstruction of his duties as Surveyor General, noted that the Judge's "character is by no means fair or honest in any other Province where he is known." In 1771 Wentworth wrote to John Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury, recommending that Wells be removed from the bench and that Grout be prohibited from practicing law. See Wentworth to John Robinson, Mar. 23, 1771, PRO, T1/484.

37 New York Historical Society, Collections, 10(1877): 196-97, 213-14; O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, 4:623. For Wells' side of the story of his assistance to the Deans, see O'Callaghan, 647-60.


40 Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Oct. 10, 1770, PRO, C.O.5/930; MHS, Collections, 6th Ser. 9(1897): 237-38; Wentworth to Eleazar Wheelock, Jan. 29, 1771, Papers of Eleazar Wheelock, Dartmouth College Archives, 771129.1. Governor Tryon of New York later accused Wentworth of deliberately making a false survey of the river in order to extend the jurisdiction of New Hampshire. John strongly denied this and said that if any error was made it was to the disadvantage of New Hampshire. See O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, 4:731-32, and NHSP, 10:217-20. For depositions attesting to deliberate fraud in the survey see O'Callaghan, 721-23.

41 O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, 4:663-68, 675-707; Eleazar Wheelock to Wentworth, Jan. 21, 1771, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 771121.1; Earl of Hillsborough to Wentworth, Dec. 11, 1770, PRO, C.O.5/937; same to same, Feb. 11, 1771, Hammond Transcripts, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, fol. 7.


Chase, *Dartmouth College*, 1:439-40. Bayley is quoted on 439. Wentworth's letter to Tryon is printed on 441-42.

Ibid., 440, 442.


In March, 1772, Wentworth wrote again to Tryon seeking lands, this time for his wife's brother, young Benning Wentworth. (O'Callaghan, *Documentary History of New York*, 4:769.) Benning's deceased father, the merchant Samuel Wentworth of Boston, had received a 5000 acre grant from his brother, Governor Benning Wentworth. John now attempted to secure this for Samuel's son. The request for 5000 acres was clearly illegal according to royal land granting instructions which called for no more than 500 acres to an individual. Wentworth, however, did not worry about this because the rule was generally ignored in America by all governors. Had it been enforced, few problems would have developed concerning speculative land holdings including the one that eventually cost New York the territory it had so strongly defended against New Hampshire.

Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, May 8, 1772, PRO, C.0.5/937.


NHSP, 18:614; Board of Trade to Wentworth, July 29, 1772, PRO, C.0.5/943; Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Oct. 28, 1772, PRO, C.0.5/938; Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, May 9, 1772, PRO, C.0.5/937.

53 NHSP, 18:599-600, 616-17, 632-33; Peter Livius, The Memorial of Peter Livius (London, 1773), 8-13; NHHS, Collections, 9:324-25.

54 New Hampshire Gazette, Nov. 2, 1770. Hurd is quoted in Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism, 68.


56 NHSP, 18:599, 624-30, 634; Livius, Memorial, 16.

57 NHHS, Collections, 9:312-17.

58 NHSP, 18:562, 601. Later, in his defense against the charge that he was attempting to get these lands for himself, Wentworth claimed that after becoming Governor he had refused Benning's solicitations for confirmation of these grants, and implied that this was a reason the will was changed. If this was true, it indicates that John Wentworth may have been more concerned about the propriety of grants made by a Governor to himself than with the possibility of acquiring these lands. See Livius, Memorial. 15.

59 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Feb. 14, 1772, WWM, R1-1395.

60 NHHS, Collections, 9:325, 336-37, 341, 343-44, 350-51; NHSP, 7:274; Livius, Memorial, 26; Board of Trade to Wentworth, July 29, 1772, PRO, C.O. 5/943.

61 NHSP, 18:623-25.
Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Oct. 28, 1772, PRO, C.0.5/938; Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Dec. 14, 1772, WWM, R64-6.

Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Dec. 14, 1772, WWM, R64-6; NEHGR, 33(1879): 353; Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Dec. 18, 1772, and Jan. 9, 1773, PRO, C.0.5/938; NHSP, 18:615-16, 630-38.

Wentworth to Eleazar Wheelock, Dec. 18, 1772, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 772668; NHSP, 7:337, 343-44; NHHS, Collections, 9:327.

NHHS, Collections, 9:304-63; NHSP, 18:646-50; WWM, R64-17, R64-18, R64-23, R64-24, R64-25; PRO, C.0.5/930; MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 42-3; Benjamin F. Parker, History of Wolfeborough (Wolfeborough, N.H., 1901), 68.

Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Dec. 14, 1772, WWM, R64-6; NHSP, 18:637-38; Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough, Apr. 12, 1770, and action of the King in Council, Nov. 16, 1770, PRO, C.0.5/930.

NHSP, 18:645-46; Thomas Macdonogh to the Marquis of Rockingham, Feb. 8, 1773, and to the Earl of Dartmouth, Apr. 28, 1773, WWM, R64-7 and R64-10, also R64-5, R64-8, R64-9; Livius Memorial, 48-50; Wentworth to Eleazar Wheelock, Apr. 22, 1773, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 773272.


Grant and Munroe, Acts of the Privy Council, 5:370-71; Public Advertiser, July 24, 1773; WWM, R64-22.


See especially the Public Advertiser, July 24, 28, 29, and August 2, 3, 6, 1773.

Burke Correspondence, 2:444; MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 44-5; Wentworth to Eleazar Wheelock, Sept. 27 and Oct. 7, 1773, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 773527 and 773557; NHSP, 7:342.

Burke Correspondence, 2:463-64; Marquis of Rockingham to the Duke of Portland, Sept. 29, 1773, Portland Mss., University of Nottingham Library.


The Marquis of Rockingham to Wentworth, July 30, 1774, Rockingham Letters, Leeds, 2B, no. 39. James Kirby Martin has made a beginning at trying to understand opposition to Wentworth dominance in New Hampshire prior to the American Revolution ("A Model for the Coming Revolution: The Birth and Death of the Wentworth Oligarchy in New Hampshire, 1741-1776," Journal of Social History, 4/1970-1971: 41-60.), but the impression he leaves of a consciously operating group of lesser officeholders, chomping at the bit, waiting for a chance to throw the Wentworths out and take over their offices, is misleading. Martin states that "Wentworth interrelationships stood out as the glaring factor convincing upwardly mobile outsiders that the government needed to be forced open." (58) As demonstrated, those relationships were a highly publicized issue in Livius's case against John Wentworth, yet none of this supposed opposition group took advantage of this opportune time to come out against the Governor. It must also be pointed out that a third of the members of the group Martin lists as hoping to obtain the offices held by the Wentworth aristocracy (56), wrote depositions in support of John Wentworth. So too did John Sullivan, the man Martin puts forward as arch-typical of this class of "upwardly
mobile" lesser officials. (NHHS, Collections, 9:304-63.) On
the other hand, the Langdon brothers, Woodbury and John, were
not included in this group. There is need for a thorough
study of social and political groups in New Hampshire before
the Revolution, especially the much discussed, but still vaguely
defined, elite dominated by the Wentworth kinship network.
This should be particularly appealing to an interested scholar,
for the province was small and the data would be manageable.

79 Wentworth was so sensitive to what was thought of him
in England that, even with a favorable verdict from the Privy
Council, he was determined to return to the mother country to
completely clear his name. See MHS, Collections, 6th Ser.,

Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Jan. 9, 1773,
PRO, C.0.5/938.

80 Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Jan. 9, 1773,
PRO, C.0.5/938.

81 MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 44-47; Sibley's

82 Wentworth to Captain Hector McNeill, Sept. 10, 1773,

83 NHSP, 7:329-34; Henry Caner to Wentworth, Nov. 8,
1773, University of Bristol Library, Mss. D.M. 388, Caner
Letter Book.

84 Bernhard Knollenberg, Growth of the American Revolu-
tion, 1766-1775 (New York, 1975), 90-94.

85 Ibid., 95-96. The newspaper commentator is quoted
on 95.

86 Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Dec. 17, 1773,
PRO, C.0.5/938; NHSP, 7:333-34; Daniell, Experiment in Republi-
canism, 74-75; Schlesinger, Colonial Merchants, 302.

87 Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Dec. 17, 1773,
PRO, C.0.5/938; Mayo, John Langdon, 45-46; Knollenberg, Growth
of the American Revolution, 99-100. The most thorough account
of the Boston Tea Party and the circumstances surrounding it
CHAPTER IX

FALL FROM AN "HONORABLE PRECIPICE":

REVOLUTION COMES TO NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1774–1775

When the provincial Assembly reconvened in January, 1774, after more than a seven-month hiatus, the representatives were greeted with a charge from Governor Wentworth "to render effective the Laws for preventing Infectious and Pestilential disorders being spread among the Inhabitants Especially of Portsmouth, a calamity too Dreadful and Distressing and (without some more coercive Laws) I am certain is too likely to happen." The immediate reference was to an outbreak of smallpox that had been menacing Portsmouth, but when Wentworth proffered this advice he must have had equally in mind the dangerous political plague he saw creeping over the American colonies.

Indeed, John Wentworth was once again deeply concerned about the spread of trouble to New Hampshire. He wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth that he wished the House members "were in as pacific a disposition as formerly," but unfortunately he had to report that "the insidious Arts of discontented Men . . . have infused such jealousys and popular schemes into their minds, That my utmost attention and influence is employed, and scarce enough, to prevent their entering upon any measures they find pursued in the neighboring colonies." Wentworth found his endeavors were not enough and his fears were borne out. His long prorogation of the Assembly following its adoption of a standing Committee of Correspondence in May, 1773, had served
no purpose. The Tea Act and now the Boston Tea Party raised the seemingly dormant dispute between America and Great Britain once again into the immediate consciousness of the colonies.

New Hampshire proved no exception. On the fifth of February the House moved to have a committee send replies to letters received since the previous May from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland. All of the correspondence reflected concern over threats to colonists' rights under the English Constitution and all included resolves expressing strong concurrence with the Virginia Burgesses' call for intercolonial solidarity. Each of the provinces had appointed a Committee of Correspondence and urged New Hampshire to do likewise. The responses agreed to by the Assembly on February 11 stated New Hampshire's unequivocal desire to cooperate with the other colonies, and indicated that the province had already followed Virginia's example and chosen a committee to correspond with the other legislatures. The seriousness with which the representatives now considered the situation was expressed in their letter to Massachusetts. "By the best Intelligence we can obtain," they wrote, "it appears that the British ministry are Resolved in a great Degree if not fully to Enslave the Inhabitants of the Colonies in America subject to the Crown of Great Britain, if by any means they can effect it, which much concerns the Americans to withstand and Prevent."³

This spirited feeling was not restricted to the Assembly or to Portsmouth. Following Portsmouth's example, by March at least nine other towns in New Hampshire had passed resolutions condemning the Tea Act as subversive of the constitutional
rights of colonists and pledging non-consumption of English tea. In Kingston a tea peddler by the name of Graham was pushing his wares by passing out free samples to the women of the town. When their husbands found out, Graham was forced to flee through a window of the tavern where he was staying and hide in a near-by swamp. Then, to the joy of a large crowd of onlookers, his tea was dumped at the foot of a "Liberty tree" and set on fire to the "repeated hurra's of Liberty and no taxes."  

Despite this flurry of activity, sentiment in the province was far from unanimous against tea or British policy. Among a series of resolves passed in March, the town of Hinsdale in derogatory reference to the anti-tea resolves of other communities asserted: "It is the Opinion of this Town that under the disguise of Patriotism, . . . Factive Self-Interest and private Ambition are frequently Concealed and that many Persons who Pretend to be Patriots and declaim Loudly in Defence of the Rights of their Country are bound by no Ties but those of Partial Passion and private Interest." In the New Hampshire Gazette one "Susanna Spindle" charged: "That the Merchants under a pretence of Guarding our Liberties, prevented the Landing of the East India Company's TEA; and at the same Time sell their own at such an extravagant Price, make it evident it is not our Interest; but their own private Gain they are pursuing." Such responses must have pleased John and, though Henry Caner kept him regularly informed of the continuing troubles encountered by Governor Hutchinson in Boston, he remained optimistic that he could maintain peace in New Hampshire.
Wentworth's main concern was with the Assembly. On February 12, following what he considered the representatives' precipitate action of joining in league with the other colonies to oppose British policy and fearing even more inflammatory measures "relating to the supremacy of Parliament," he prorogued them. After considering the situation for several weeks the Governor, early in March, dissolved the Assembly with the hope that new elections would produce a House more congenial to the exercise of royal authority. At this juncture a cry went up for a broader, more equitable representation in New Hampshire's legislature. Given the state of representation in the Assembly and the popular arguments currently enjoying wide circulation in the colonies, this development should not have surprised Wentworth. One "Publicus" argued in the Gazette that if the issue of "no taxation without representation" were to be taken seriously, one of the first places to be considered for reform should be the provincial Assembly. He pointed out that Nottingham, one of New Hampshire's major towns, had never been granted representation and that all of Grafton County, which was taxed and supported two militia regiments, remained unrepresented in the legislature. 6

"Publicus" had hit on a sensitive point for the leaders of government in Portsmouth. In 1773 only 46 of the province's 147 towns were represented; nearly 40 percent of New Hampshire's taxes were collected in towns that had no voice in the Assembly. 7 Although John Wentworth had been eager to extend the judicial system to remote parts of the province, his plans for development of the west had not included an expansion of representation.
The reason is easy enough to see. Judgeships were the Governor's to fill and gave him a direct means of control in distant, newly-settled areas. Elected seats in the Assembly, however, were not within his purview. Wentworth already felt his patronage power was well below what was necessary to maintain an adequate influence of royal government in New Hampshire. Any significant broadening of representation would have made the House almost impossible to control.

Now, though, there were impelling reasons to take this long-avoided step. For the first time there was widespread unrest in the province. Moreover, Wentworth found that inflammatory arguments that had been used broadly in the colonies against Great Britain now were cropping up at home and being turned on his own administration. He wisely recognized that the seriousness of the situation demanded the elimination of all possible sources of discontent. Accordingly, when a petition was sent to the Governor and Council requesting more equitable representation in the Assembly Wentworth, as one observer reported, "recommended it for his Majesty's Service, and Peace and Quiet of the Government." That he took this step under pressure in order to head off further trouble is clear. Open to question, however, is whether he intended to grant representation to towns on the basis of population, or whether he was planning to apportion election writs selectively in order to pack the Assembly with "friends" who could be counted on for support. Judging from the towns that gained representation a year later, the latter motivation appears more nearly
correct. It made no difference in the spring of 1774, however, for the Council opposed Wentworth and rejected the petition.8

The new Assembly was no larger than the old one when it met on April 7, but the turnover in membership was considerable. The Governor was uncertain what the temper of this new body would be, especially, he explained to Lord Dartmouth, as "the present popular commotions in the Colonies, renders it impossible to form any rational conjectures of their future Conduct." The representatives' request for a month's prorogation thus happily provided him an opportunity for more studied consideration of the new makeup of the House. Wentworth was worried mainly about the Portsmouth members who, he was afraid, would spread that town's "spirit of opposition" to the rest of the Assembly. His concern stemmed in part from the written instructions Portsmouth had provided its representatives. Among those instructions were calls for annually elected Assemblies, open galleries in the House, and investigation of the expenditure of all public money, all demands strongly reflective of the English opposition political ideology—by 1774 resounding stridently throughout all the colonies—that was so vitally concerned with threats to the liberty of the people by an overpowerful government. John Wentworth could see suspicion of his own prerogative and the Council in the calls for trial by jury in the Court of Appeals, Superior and Inferior Court justices that would sit on good behavior rather than at the will of the Crown, and adequate publicly paid salaries for judges to place them above influence. Worst of all from John Wentworth's point of view, though, was the first instruction
to the Portsmouth assemblymen proclaiming a determination to join with the other provinces to resist current British policy. It was not just the instructions, however, that bothered Wentworth; it was the representatives themselves. Two out of the three members of Portsmouth's delegation were new. In the place of William Parker who had never opposed the Governor, and John Sherburne whose tendency to support the anti-British cause had been subdued with judiciously proffered political appointments, the town had returned Samuel Cutts and Woodbury Langdon. Cutts, like Langdon a successful merchant outside the Wentworth sphere, had since the time of the Stamp Act been an unswerving and active opponent of all English efforts to enforce the trade laws. For his smuggling activities he had suffered more than once at the hands of the vice-admiralty court, including the loss of his ship, Resolution, in 1771. Samuel Cutts clearly had no love for royal authority. Woodbury Langdon, of course, had been John Wentworth's avowed personal enemy since the Livius affair. It thus is not surprising that Wentworth expected nothing but trouble from these two men. Moreover, Woodbury Langdon's emergence onto the political scene heightened the Governor's sensitivity to the threat he perceived had arisen from the activities of Peter Livius.

As during the previous December, Wentworth in April was still linking the atmosphere of dissent in Portsmouth to Livius' efforts to unseat him. Late that month he wrote to Dartmouth that peace and harmony would undoubtedly still have prevailed among the people of his province had not "Mr. Livius unhappily disseminated other principles among them," and raised in some
the "hopes of succeeding into the offices of Government, thro' his influence." The Livius incident had indeed encouraged certain long-time opponents of Wentworth family dominance, in particular Woodbury Langdon, to openly declare against the Governor. Others who would have liked to do the same but were still hesitant, may finally have seen the opportunity to attack John Wentworth in the unrest generated against Crown authority by the Tea Act and the dumping of the tea in Boston. In this sense were Wentworth's troubles of 1773 related to the deteriorating political situation he saw in New Hampshire in the spring of 1774. Yet the specter of Peter Livius tended to obscure pertinent issues for John Wentworth. He did not yet comprehend the depth of the conviction behind the anti-British sentiment that was sweeping America, nor did he seem to take into account its non-local nature. Samuel Cutts may long have harbored a resentment of the Wentworths but, for one who had been energetically opposing what he considered unjustly restrictive and unconstitutional English laws for nearly a decade, it would be difficult to assign this as the main motive in his political activities of 1774. Despite seemingly abundant evidence to the contrary, Wentworth continued to place major blame for the current discontent on Peter Livius. It was no doubt this misconception that led him to believe, as he told Dartmouth, that the situation in New Hampshire could be turned around by the application of "prudent firmness and perseverance." Had he known what was taking place in England he would have had little cause for such optimism.
From the time that news arrived in London in January of the destruction of the East India tea, the cabinet of Lord North was determined that Boston should be punished and restitution made. The Ministry was convinced that it was this or complete loss of control over all the colonies. Britain must this time stand resolute; there could be no backing down. By February a plan was resolved upon that would take away Boston's port privileges until a proper indemnity was paid to the East India Company. Lord North introduced the bill into the Commons on March 18, it passed on the twenty-fifth over pleas for more moderate measures by a few Rockinghamites, and was signed into law by the King five days later. The Boston Port Act stated that as of June 1, 1774, Boston would be closed to all maritime commerce except for military supplies for the forces of the Crown and food and fuel needed for the sustenance of the town's inhabitants. This ban would be lifted only when "full satisfaction" had been made to the English East India merchants, "reasonable satisfaction" to customs officers in Boston, and the Privy Council had decided that restoration of "peace and obedience" was enough advanced to warrant reopening the port. The terms were decidedly vague. Showing a willingness to use force if necessary, the Government named General Thomas Gage to replace Thomas Hutchinson as Governor of Massachusetts and sent him out with four regiments of British soldiers.12

The New Hampshire Assembly convened as scheduled on May 10. That same day news of the Boston Port Act reached Massachusetts. Reaction was swift. Within two days a letter signed by Samuel Adams for the Boston Committee of Correspondence
was on its way to Portsmouth. Calling the closing of Boston harbor a "stroke of Vengeance," the letter made a plea for all the colonists to stand together to "frustrate" this abominable measure. Just as Wentworth had feared, the Portsmouth delegation led the way in opposition to British authority by reading this communication in the Assembly. The Governor probably was relieved and possibly hopeful, when the issue was set aside by the House for consideration of more traditional business, but his respite was not long. On May 27 the Assembly approved the appointment of a provincial Committee of Correspondence which included Samuel Cutts and others, such as Josiah Bartlett of Kingston, known to be strong in the anti-British cause. The following morning a resolution was approved for the Speaker to answer all letters from other colonies to assure them of New Hampshire's willingness "to join in all salutary measures . . . for saving the Rights and Privileges of the Americans." That the Assembly was in a defiant mood was made clear to Wentworth when these actions were followed by a vote for an annual supply of £1000. Such a small sum had never before been proposed during his governorship and he considered it less than half of the minimum amount needed for properly running the province.¹³

John Wentworth may have received some comfort from the fact that the House was almost evenly divided over the vote for the Committee of Correspondence. Nevertheless, he could take no chances on further radical actions, a realization reinforced by the arrival of a letter from Dartmouth expressing the King's displeasure at news of the Portsmouth tea resolves
and warning the Governor to be on his guard. Accordingly, on Monday, the thirtieth of May, he adjourned the Assembly and spent the next week attempting to get the votes for these "extra Provincial measures" rescinded. Because of the close division in the House, Wentworth doubtless considered this not too difficult a task. A little influence applied on a few key representatives would certainly remedy the situation. Before he could accomplish his goal, though, he received more disturbing news. A movement was afoot for a meeting of all the colonies in a general congress.¹⁴

Upon arrival in Virginia of the news that the port of Boston had been closed by the British, the House of Burgesses without hesitation moved that June 1 be set aside as a day of fasting and prayer "to implore the divine interposition for averting . . . destruction of our Civil Rights and the Evils of civil War, and to give us one heart and one Mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper means, every injury to American Rights." Understandably taking offense at this strong statement, Governor Dunmore dissolved the House. Spurred on, the Burgesses met extralegally the following day at the Raleigh Tavern and sent out a call for an intercolonial congress. Other colonies soon followed Virginia's lead, including Connecticut on June 3. Communications from these two provinces concerning a congress of the combined colonies probably were the ones that John Wentworth learned his cousin, Speaker John Wentworth, had in his possession at the end of the first week in June. Here was an even greater threat than the measures already adopted by the Assembly. Wentworth may have recognized
the inefficacy of the Boston Port Act, but his first concern had to be the maintenance of royal authority in New Hampshire. He realized he could not allow his province to join the others in such a blatantly inflammatory action and on June 8, rather than continue to work for a reversal of the earlier votes, he dissolved the Assembly. He hoped that a cooling-off period of a few weeks would convince prospective members of the next Assembly "of the imprudence and error of measures that tend to weaken or subvert the subordination of the Colonies."\(^{15}\)

John Wentworth faced this seemingly unending sequence of unsettling events with great equanimity. He even seems to have contemplated a normal, leisurely summer at Wolfeboro for he invited Henry Caner to spend the season with him in New Hampshire. Unfortunately for the Governor, no opportunity was provided for tempers to subside. The day after he dissolved the Assembly word arrived in New Hampshire of further measures by the British Government that could only exacerbate the anger, resentment, and fear already raised by the Boston Port Act. In a move obviously designed to augment royal control, Parliament had passed a bill significantly altering the Massachusetts Charter of 1691. The most significant provision of this act changed the Massachusetts Council from a body elected by the Assembly to one now appointed by the Crown. This Massachusetts Regulating Act also took away a number of other long-time political functions of the people and vested them in the royal governor. If this were not enough to convince many colonists of a determined effort in England to subvert their constitutional rights, another act passed Parliament allowing any magistrate
in Massachusetts accused of murder or other capital crimes in
the suppression of disorderly riots to be removed to Great
Britain or another colony, supposedly to insure his fair trial.
To many in the colonies, however, this appeared as license for
the unlimited use of physical force against them by the British
and, not surprisingly, in America it became commonly known as
"the Murdering Act."¹⁶

News of these additional English measures only fed the
flames ignited in Boston by the Port Act. When Henry Caner
wrote in the middle of June to reluctantly decline the Governor's
invitation, he noted disparagingly that the "Sons of Violence,"
in spite of the presence of two new British regiments, were
keeping up their pressure against royal authority. Wentworth,
though, did not have to be reminded of the trouble in Boston
for he continued to see its effects in New Hampshire. On
June 5, the Boston Committee of Correspondence adopted what
it termed the "Solemn League and Covenant," an agreement to
cease all trade with Great Britain as of October 1 if the so-
called "Intolerable Acts" had not been repealed by that time.
Any merchant refusing to conform was to be "boycotted forever."
The covenant was then circulated for adoption by other towns.
Portsmouth picked it up and later in the month sent a similar
covenant of its own to the other New Hampshire towns along with
a covering letter signed by Samuel Cutts for the local Committee
of Correspondence. A printed form with a blank for each town
to fill in its own name, the Portsmouth covenant expressed
sympathy for the oppressed people of Boston, spoke of the need
to "preserve and recover the much injured Constitution of our
Country," and called for a halt to trade with Britain and a boycott of British goods. Most of the rest of the province, however, was not ready to take such drastic action. In Dover, the Governor's friend, Jeremy Belknap, though strong in the colonial cause, contended that this unilateral command on the part of the Portsmouth Committee could hurt many innocent merchants and had no grounding in popular will. "Tyranny in one shape," asserted Belknap, "is as odious to me as Tyranny in another." Taking the minister's statement to heart, the town of Dover set the covenant aside. So did most of the other towns in New Hampshire. Wentworth was aware, however, that his immediate trouble lay not in the interior but in Portsmouth. He thus was prepared when, in June, another potentially volatile problem arose close to home.17

Merchant Edward Parry, despite his claims to the contrary, had apparently been expecting a shipment of East India tea.18 John Wentworth had also been informed and on Saturday, June 25, when the mast ship Grosvenor arrived at the harbor's mouth with Parry's tea aboard, the Governor had the consignee send the ship's master procedural instructions via Fort William and Mary. After the example of the Boston Tea Party, the determination expressed by Portsmouth not to let any tea enter New Hampshire, and the still rising intensity of feeling in the town against the British, Wentworth realized that special precautions would be needed to avoid open violence without compromising the operation of royal law. During the weekend the Governor made a point of openly leaving town for Dover. He did not return Monday morning and at noon the twenty-seven
chests of tea stowed on the *Grenenor* were loaded into boats, rowed to the wharf, and carted to the customhouse without incident. Wentworth's ruse worked. Not expecting the tea to be landed during the Governor's absence, those intent on keeping "that pernicious, destructive, troublesome commodity" out of New Hampshire had been caught off guard.

They did not take long to recover, however, and a town meeting was hurriedly called for that afternoon. There a committee was chosen to wait on Parry and inform him that the tea must be shipped out of the province as soon as possible. The town also voted to post a watch on the tea, no doubt as much to prevent the authorities from trying to move it as to avoid any incidents repetitious of the Boston Tea Party. The next day, Tuesday the twenty-eighth, upon confrontation by the committee Parry wisely cooperated and agreed to reship the tea. He was then allowed to pay the duty. This clearly was a victory for John Wentworth. East India tea had entered New Hampshire peacefully and the duty had been paid. There had been no breach of the law. Wentworth did not care if the tea was reshipped; that could not be considered an offense by the authorities in England. This no doubt galled some, especially enemies like Woodbury Langdon and those strongly anti-British such as Samuel Cutts, but their voices were not strong enough to prevail. The majority seemed not to mind that the duty had been paid, probably because of the realization that with the tea gone the tax could not be passed on to the inhabitants of New Hampshire. With the agreement made, the twenty-seven chests of tea were loaded on board the sloop Molly to be shipped out
by noon the following day. All Parry had to do was find a destination for it.

Trouble, however, was not over. About nine o'clock that evening "three overheated mariners," as Wentworth described them, attempted to raise a mob to destroy the tea and the Molly. John responded by calling on Colonel John Fenton, a recent acquaintance but a man he knew he could rely on. Fenton in turn "gathered a few gentlemen" and stood guard during the night preserving both ship and cargo from further danger. On Wednesday morning the Molly weighed anchor and began to fall down river. But the crisis still had not ended. Parry sent the Governor a message asking that the ship be "detained at the Fort, untill I shall have proper time to Consider and find out where to send the Tea, that it may be secure from being destroyed which, by the present juncture of affairs, perplexes me very much to know." Still apprehensive that violence would overtake the Molly before she reached the open sea, Parry requested a guard for her at the fort.

Parry's fear was not a product of his imagination. Drums were beating in the town to raise volunteers for one last effort to destroy the tea before the chance was missed. Taking immediate action, Wentworth sent out a call for all members of the Council and every available magistrate to meet him at the wharf. He was determined to intervene personally if necessary to counteract the incipient riot. He also ordered Captain Cochran and his men to board and defend the ship until she was ready to leave port. In Cochran's absence, Sheriff John Parker would command the fort. To Wentworth's relief,
however, he was shortly informed that several magistrates and Councillors Warner and Rindge had confronted the crowd and persuaded the people to disperse. In the meantime Parry, having decided that the only safe port for tea in America was Halifax, sent instructions to Benjamin Partridge, master of the Molly, to set his sails and proceed to the northeast immediately. Partridge was more than willing to oblige but, on clearing the fort, found the sloop becalmed and was forced to return to port for another tension-filled night. Finally on Thursday, June 30, the ship set sail and the controversial East India herb left New Hampshire for good.

John Wentworth had weathered another storm. He had acted resolutely, even boldly. By having the tea brought in and entered at the customhouse, however, he had taken a chance. His scheme could have backfired and produced a reaction as serious as that in Boston. But Wentworth had not moved unwittingly to uphold royal authority regardless of all costs. He acted rather on the basis of a keen perception of the circumstances peculiar to New Hampshire. A few days after the episode he wrote to Dartmouth that he had been "confident the magistrates and freeholders would not desert me." He had gauged the situation correctly. Even though there was evidence of strong anti-British sentiment in the colony, and especially in Portsmouth, the predominant attitude was still one of moderation. There was a growing determination to stand firm against arbitrary and unjust enactments of Parliament, but there was an equal desire to avoid unnecessary violent or provocative acts. The Governor noted that when he returned to town from Dover in the midst of
the controversy he was treated with the "usual kindness and respect." The town itself had placed a guard on the tea and the committee chosen to deal with the consignee, Wentworth related, was made up of "many principal gentlemen, discreet men, who I knew detested every idea of violating property: Men disposed to prevent mischief." There was not a controlling radical party in Portsmouth as in Boston. The town was operating under the influence of concerned, but still basically conservative, men. For this reason Wentworth had again been able to avoid a serious incident in his province. Nevertheless, when only a few days later he saw the rise of a less violent but in the long run more serious threat to royal authority, he found he had no control at all.

The general appeals for an intercolonial congress which had reached New Hampshire early in June took a more definite form upon the arrival of a June 17 invitation from the Massachusetts House to send delegates to a congress at Philadelphia on the first of September. Here was something concrete that the Assembly could act on, except that the Governor had dissolved it on June 8 precisely out of a fear that this situation might arise. Now was a chance, though, for the provincial Committee of Correspondence, chosen before the Assembly's dissolution, to show its effectiveness. It did not prove lacking. The Committee notified all representatives to convene in Portsmouth on July 6 for the purpose of choosing New Hampshire's delegates to the proposed Philadelphia congress. Under existing law this clearly was an illegal action and, when the Assemblymen convened in the House chamber on the sixth,
Wentworth was ready for them. When they had barely settled into their seats the Governor marched in with Sheriff John Parker close at his heels. This "illegal" and "unwarrantable" summoning of the Provincial Assembly, Wentworth declared to the representatives, by "wresting out of the King's hands his sole prerogative of calling Assembly's, in open opposition to and defiance of the Laws of his Majesty's authority" was a dangerous step toward "the utter subversion of the Constitution of this Province." Wentworth then ordered them to disperse and directed Sheriff Parker to see that his command was carried out. Force would have been of little avail to the Governor in this instance and fortunately for him it was not necessary. Acceding to his wishes, the members left the room in orderly fashion. Wentworth headed home to write Lord Dartmouth, confident that he had again succeeded in preventing the consummation of openly illegal measures in New Hampshire.20

As he shortly found out, however, his optimism was premature. As the Virginia Burgesses had done in May in Williamsburg following dissolution by the Governor, the New Hampshire representatives repaired to a local tavern and proceeded with their business. They decided there to call on each town in the colony to send delegates to a provincial congress to be held in Exeter on July 21 for the purpose of selecting representatives to the intercolonial congress slated for September 1 in Philadelphia. Two weeks later the first provincial congress convened in Exeter, eighty-five members present. They lost no time in voting to send John Sullivan of Durham and Nathaniel Folsom of Exeter as New Hampshire's
delegates to Philadelphia. A committee was created to draw up instructions for these men and, before disbanding, a unanimous vote was taken to recommend that each town in the province contribute something toward the relief of Boston. 21

The events of mid-July, 1774, marked a significant turning point for John Wentworth. Up to this time he had been successful in controlling anti-British dissidence in his colony, probably as successful as any governor in America. Through the turmoil that had been shaking the British Empire since he had taken office, Wentworth had maintained unusually good relations with the Assembly. When in the winter and spring of 1774 it became apparent that he could no longer suppress dissent within that body, he retained control of provincial affairs by exercising his royal prerogative and twice dissolving the Assembly. The unauthorized July 6 meeting of the legislature was significant in that it marked the first openly antagonistic confrontation between the Governor and the Assembly in New Hampshire. Of even more importance was the now apparent fact, as the result of the representatives' actions in the Portsmouth tavern and the congress in Exeter, that John Wentworth's prerogative no longer carried any effective power. His order to the Assemblymen in the name of the Crown to desist from their unconstitutional activities had simply been ignored. Moreover, the first step had been taken since the earliest settlement of Englishmen in New Hampshire, a momentous step, toward the creation of a government based on the sovereignty of the people of the province rather than the King in Parliament. Wentworth had no coercive power, military or otherwise; he was
politically impotent. Although he kept up the illusion of authority, he must have realized from this point on that he had lost control of not only New Hampshire but his own future, and that his fate was tied directly to the broad problem of deteriorating British-colonial relations.

About that situation John Wentworth was not optimistic. A week after the call for the congress in Exeter he wrote Dartmouth: "I am apt to believe the spirit of enthusiasm, which generally prevails through the colonies, will create an obedience that reason or religion would fail to procure." Yet Wentworth was enough impressed by that "enthusiasm" to give brief consideration, rare for him, to the arguments the colonials were now so stridently trumpeting against the British. The word "liberty," which had become such a stock part of patriot rhetoric, was a term that gave him pause. In a revealing letter of July 22, the day after the meeting of the Exeter congress, Wentworth expressed his thoughts to William Williams, a friend in Connecticut. "The Cause of Liberty," he wrote, "is undoubtedly, the great Duty of all good Men; and under the English Constitution must be more essentially the interest of those intrusted with the administration of Government, seeing their power, emoluments—honor and usefulness are rooted in the Laws," laws which, he went on, "may be well denominated Rules for the enjoyment of liberty."22 Liberty was everyone's concern, but significantly according to Wentworth, it was especially the concern of those whose job it was to uphold the law, that is government officials. Under the English constitution the law was the guarantee of liberty and Wentworth clearly
implied that liberty could not exist over and above the law. In fact, there could be no hope for liberty unless the law were obeyed. Government was the protector, not oppressor, of basic liberties. Thus the colonists' argument for preserving liberty by going against British law was, to Wentworth, completely fallacious and subversive of the constitution. Like Thomas Hutchinson, his fellow governor in Massachusetts whose conventional and rigid perception of government had already forced him out of his seat, and unlike many colonials who were increasingly searching the writings of John Locke and other political philosophers for answers in the growing conflict between Britain and the colonies, John Wentworth could not conceive of a law higher than British law.

But Wentworth did not linger long in considering the ideas of the heightening constitutional debate. These were for him only a manifestation of much more practical problems that stemmed from a temporary loss from sight by leaders on both sides of their mutual interests. Wentworth's view, one which in the first instance had been so influenced by Rockingham, of the necessity for a moderate approach to the British-American relationship which took into account the needs and welfare of both sides, was at this time reinforced by the Marquis. "If the competition," he wrote John, "is now between this Country and North America which shall be Wildest and Rashest I can hardly guess at present wh/Ich/ of the two will go the greatest lengths." Critical of the Ministry, Rockingham decried the most recent British measures as not "form'd on principles of justice and policy." He "equally disapprove/d," however, the
actions taken in America. Rockingham expressed what Wentworth believed, that the problem lay in unwise formulation and administration of policy.

But as bad as the current difficulties were, John Wentworth felt that the fundamental ties between England and the American colonies were too strong to be permanently sundered. "Certain I am," he told William Williams, "that Britain and America have a reciprocal affection, which neither can give up." That former "harmony, which of late seems to be obscured," he continued, "I am convinc'd cannot be eradicated. Time will allay the dispositions that now operate powerfully." This may have been wishful thinking on Wentworth's part, but more than that it was the conviction of a man in whom sentiment for America and England mingled equally and inseparably. John Wentworth's attachment to both was so deep that he had genuine difficulty perceiving them as separate entities. Wentworth has been referred to as "the most English of Americans." It might with equal truth be stated that he was the most profoundly American of British officials in the colonies. Indeed, at this time of worsening relations he thought of himself as one who might "render essential services to both Countrys" in moving toward reconciliation. But he also realized that he was in no position to do so. His influence was "so small," he lamented, "that like the Widows mite, it's merit consists cheifly in the sincere integrity of it's Intention." Like Rockingham in England, he could only watch helplessly as extremists on both sides made the situation worse.
There was little for Wentworth to do now but await the results of the Philadelphia congress and hope that moderate minds would prevail. In the meantime he would have to stay as close as possible to Portsmouth and use what influence he did have to maintain peace, or at least try to prevent the kinds of serious outrages that had been perpetrated against royal authority in other provinces. Periodic correspondence from Lord Dartmouth let him know that Whitehall, even with the greatest trouble concentrated in other colonies, was not ignoring the situation in New Hampshire. As the end of August approached, Wentworth, for the first time since the founding of Dartmouth College, called off his annual commencement trip to Hanover. He saw potential trouble at that time in the presence in Portsmouth of Boston's town clerk who, he believed, was soliciting donations for the relief of that town's inhabitants. More than this, however, John Wentworth was concerned about the imminent arrival of another shipment of tea which he had known about since July.24

Much had transpired since the tea incident in June and Wentworth expected trouble. The situation was aggravated by the arrival of a tea ship in Salem which, early in September, aroused tempers in Portsmouth in anticipation of tea destined for the Piscataqua. On September 8 the mast ship Fox anchored in the river with thirty chests of East India Bohea tea aboard consigned, once again, to Edward Parry. Things remained quiet until late that evening but, a little after ten, the Governor received an urgent note from Parry explaining that rowdies were smashing his windows "with such Violence as to force Open the
Inside Window Shutters" of his house. Wentworth had doubtless been enjoying his conversation with Thomas Macdonogh who had himself arrived that very day on board the Fox. John had not seen his secretary since his departure for England in December, 1772, to organize the Governor's defense in the Livius case. There was much for the two men to discuss. This was Wentworth's first opportunity to hear a first-hand account of the trial. It was also a chance to gain crucial information about the political situation in Great Britain, not only on policies and attitudes towards the colonies, but on the condition and prospects for change of the current Government. This was all thrust into the background, however, on the immediate alarm of fifes and drums calling out the mob.

When Parry's message arrived, Wentworth dispatched Macdonogh and his brother-in-law, young Benning Wentworth, who was also at his home, to see how serious the trouble was. By the time they reached Parry's house the violence had subsided, but the following morning the merchant petitioned the Governor and Council for protection. The Council responded by calling in the town magistrates and charging them to keep the peace and protect Parry. Significantly, though, the Governor and Council also sent for Parry and Zacharia Norman, Captain of the Fox, and informed them that because the ship was anchored on the far side of the river and was thus within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts rather than New Hampshire, they could not be responsible for any violence perpetrated against the vessel or its cargo. It appears that Wentworth was willing to seize on this technicality to avoid a potentially dangerous confrontation
over the tea. He did, indeed, find the situation in Portsmouth "more precarious" than that of the previous June, and he later wrote that it was overcome only after "the utmost Peril and Difficulty." Wentworth was so concerned that he requested the Sheriff and the Attorney General to return from Exeter where the Superior Court was meeting. He also called in Peter Gilman and Thomas Westbrook Waldron to bring the Council to full strength and then held them in session until two o'clock in the morning.

In the meantime, though, Parry had been meeting with representatives from the town. They apparently were willing to accept his claim that the tea had been shipped without his consent or knowledge for they agreed, as before, to allow the tea to be entered and the duty paid if Parry would immediately reship it. Accordingly, on Saturday, the tenth, the tea was brought in and on Sunday it left Portsmouth for Halifax. The episode was indicative of the moderation still prevalent in Portsmouth, especially in light of Wentworth's almost open invitation to destruction of the tea by declaring it out of his protection. John was relieved that his predicament had been resolved peacefully, but he was not optimistic. Two days after the departure of the tea he wrote to Dartmouth that sentiment in New Hampshire was now wholly unified in support of the colonial position. On this, though, he was not entirely correct.

On September 5 the First Continental Congress convened at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. Recent news of the Quebec Act which, among other things, established a government in that
northern province without a representative legislature, gave a sense of urgency to the proceedings. The delegates did not flinch in the face of what seemed by now a consciously concerted British effort at total subjugation of colonial rights. Making their position clear, they voted on the seventeenth to approve the radical resolves of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, which not only denounced "the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America," but called for defiance of the recent British acts and exhorted the people of the province to prepare themselves militarily. Late in the month the Congress made a substantive decision of its own when it resolved that the colonies should boycott all British goods as of December 1. This took concrete form in the specific enumerations of a plan entitled the Association adopted on the eighteenth of October. Putting teeth into this commercial coercion, the Association called on all towns in the colonies to establish committees of inspection to insure enforcement of the boycott movement. Before it dissolved itself on 26 October, the Philadelphia Congress also adopted a formal Statement of Rights and Grievances, approved a petition to King George asking for redress of those grievances, and set May 10, 1775, as the date for the meeting of a Second Congress in case that request had not been met.26

Although John Wentworth assumed that all New Hampshire had unquestioningly joined the radical cause, in October several interior towns declared their support for established authority and warned that they would not meekly follow the dictates of self-appointed men. Francestown, though affirming
its deep concern for the preservation of basic rights, resolved to "at all times . . . show our disapprobation of all unlawful proceedings of unjust men congregating together as they pretend to maintain their liberties." New Boston adopted similar resolutions on the same day. But if Wentworth was cheered to still find pockets of what he considered rationality within his province, he nevertheless realized it meant little against the prevailing atmosphere of increasing bitterness toward Britain, especially in the older part of New Hampshire. In mid-September the town of Kingston sent its sympathies and 100 sheep to Boston. On the nineteenth Portsmouth appointed a committee to receive donations for the Massachusetts port. Three weeks later, on October 10, the town went even further and voted £200 for Boston's relief, "near four times their Province tax" exclaimed an incredulous John Wentworth. At that same meeting a Committee of Ways and Means, consisting of forty-five members, was chosen to meet regularly for the consideration of anything "unfriendly to the Interest of the Community." This fit very well with the call from the Continental Congress for local committees of inspection. The Governor, however, did not view this action favorably and he soon became disgusted with what he considered the Portsmouth committee's foolish pettiness. When it was discovered that three barrels of pineapples and oranges en route from the West Indies to General Gage's wife in Boston were aboard a ship in the Piscataqua, Wentworth was forced to rescue the fruit from zealous committee members and take it to his own house for safekeeping. "Such Follys," he remarked to a friend, "dishonor a country."
John Wentworth's comment was born out of disappointment, not bitterness. Early in October Henry Caner had guided to Wentworth's care an Anglican minister, one Mr. Peters, who was fleeing back to London from anti-English furies in Connecticut. The Governor entertained Peters in his home but then, fearing for his safety, sent him off to the Castle to await the sailing of the next mast ship. Before the minister departed, though, Wentworth advised him not to be vindictive on his arrival in England, but to tell his story with moderation and not treat harshly even "those who have most cruelly treated him."28 This was a tribute not only to John Wentworth's benevolent nature, but also to his belief that a solution, though not necessarily immediate, would eventually be found in the dispute between the colonies and Great Britain. Regardless of the current bleak prospects, reconciliation was a certainty in his mind. Unfortunately, Wentworth took a step at this time that not only made the situation worse, but cost him whatever small bit of authority and sympathy he still maintained in New Hampshire. Although he could not know it at the time, his action would mean life-long alienation from his province.

General Gage needed barracks for his soldiers. With the situation in Massachusetts verging on open rebellion, however, he knew there was little chance of obtaining enough local artisans to construct the buildings. The General thus turned to other royal governors for help. John Wentworth did not hesitate to respond. Realizing that the situation in Portsmouth was now little better than in Massachusetts, John contacted Nicholas Austin, a friend from Middleton, asking that he gather
as many carpenters as possible in the Wolfeboro vicinity and send them to him. When they arrived, the Governor informed them that General Gage would pay their wages and packed them off to Boston. Wentworth attempted to keep his action as quiet as possible, hesitating to disclose even to Austin the destination of the carpenters. Nicholas Austin did know what purpose the Governor had in mind for these artisans, however, and it was not long before others knew too.

On October 28 a notice from the Portsmouth Committee of Ways and Means appeared in the New Hampshire Gazette in regard to a report that "some Person or Persons under the Crown" had been procuring carpenters in the area of Wolfeboro. Because the purpose of these workers was to aid General Gage in constructing barracks and thus "give every Assistant to the present despotick Measures," declared the Committee, the "cruel and unmanly" person responsible for this outrage should be deemed "an Enemy . . . to the Community." There was no question who that person was. If anyone needed concrete proof they got it on November 8 when the Rochester Committee of Correspondence called Nicholas Austin before them and forced him to confess that he had, indeed, been working for the Governor.29

Why did John Wentworth make this seemingly provocative move? First of all, he did not view it as an immoderate measure but rather as a needed bolster to royal authority in the face of developing anarchy. He could see that if the current trend continued with no countervailing force, the colonies might soon slip into chaos. As a Crown official Wentworth felt a responsibility to prevent the complete subversion of established
order and authority. By the fall of 1774 he realized that to do that military force might be necessary. "Popular torrents," he remarked to Thomas Waldron, "cannot safely be check't, without irresistible power." Moreover, Wentworth was convinced he had done the right thing. "Be assured my friend," he wrote Waldron concerning the carpenters two days before his censure by the Portsmouth Committee, "it is a happy circumstance to the Province; it will help a reconciliation, infinitely promote it! Small circumstances often produce great events, or at least lead to them." It is not surprising that the Governor at this time was also encouraging the return of deserters to Gage's army and securing blankets for the General.30

Secondly, although Wentworth realized that the colonial position had been widely adopted in New Hampshire, he seems still to have underestimated the depth and conviction of that sentiment. Thus in November, 1774, he was still ascribing a large share of his immediate trouble to "Mr. Livius' few adherents." Central among these was Woodbury Langdon to whom Wentworth attributed "sole production" of the resolves that had condemned him for recruiting the carpenters. But even though he was willing to explain away the resentment raised against him as the work of a small knot of enemies, Wentworth from the beginning had been aware of the serious nature of his undertaking. The fact that he attempted to keep it secret is proof enough of that. When the furor broke he must have at least partially realized, difficult as it was to admit, his misjudgment. Even such a close friend as Eleazar Wheelock, who was still strongly supportive, could not help injecting a
questioning note in a letter to Wentworth concerning the Governor's wisdom in the affair. It was unfortunate, but he had been discovered. As he found out, the consequences were disastrous. Regardless of whose work it was, John Wentworth had been branded an enemy of his province. His authority and influence were smashed beyond redemption.

For the first time John Wentworth felt uncomfortable in New Hampshire, the province of his birth, the province he had known and loved all his life. Surrounded by hostile forces Wentworth began to feel a sense of isolation, alienation, even fear. Early in November he wrote to Captain Mowat of HMS Canceaux in Boston harbor expressing his regret that the ship was sailing to New York instead of to Portsmouth. Indeed, the Governor had little reason for optimism. The tide of sentiment in New Hampshire was now running strongly against Great Britain and royal authority. Exeter, like Portsmouth, granted a substantial sum for the relief of Boston. On November 8 a congress was held in Hillsborough County to "excite in the minds of people a due respect to all just measures that may be recommended by the present Grand Congress at Philadelphia." On that same day New Hampshire's delegates to Philadelphia, John Sullivan and Nathaniel Folsom, arrived in Portsmouth where, according to the New Hampshire Gazette, they "were joyfully received by the Inhabitants." At mid-month Wentworth was complaining about "reprehensible violences" being carried out under the name of "liberty" in both Hillsborough and Cheshire Counties. The Committee of Ways and Means in Portsmouth took steps to enforce the Continental Association by preventing a Captain Chivers from
carrying fifty head of sheep to the West Indies. At its town
meeting on the twenty-eighth, Durham unanimously approved the
proceedings of the Continental Congress and appointed a committee
to see that the Association was enforced. Two days later the
provincial Committee of Correspondence sent notices to all
towns urging that they do the same. The Committee also called
on the towns to meet once again to choose delegates to the
Congress scheduled for Philadelphia in May. John Wentworth
found government in New Hampshire "totally prostrated" by
"popular Tyranny." 32

It thus is surprising to find Wentworth persistently
expressing optimism throughout this period. On November 9 he
reported to Rockingham that New Hampshire "has caught the
infection; but I think it has passed the crisis." Nine days
later he informed Eleazar Wheelock that the clamor over the
carpenters had abated in Portsmouth and that peace seemed even
to be returning to Boston. Further, Wentworth expected this
mood to "spread thro' all the country, as did all the disquiet
that has disturbed the people for six years past." On that
same day he told Jeremy Belknap he believed the worst was over
and that conditions would now begin to improve. These statements
appear anomalous within the political situation of November,
1774, especially given Wentworth's perception of his own diffi-
culties. They might be dismissed as wishful thinking, as the
normal reaction of anyone in the midst of crisis who seeks to
reassure himself that all is not as bad as it seems and that
conditions soon will get better. But these remarks represent
more than that. John Wentworth apparently saw at hand at least
the possibility of a solution to the conflict between America and Britain. On November 18 he declared to Belknap that "there is some prospect of a civil creation soon emerging out of the present chaotic jumble of discordant political elements." Wentworth did not elaborate on this "civil creation," but a letter written to Thomas Waldron a week later provides a further clue to his thinking. "Whenever the period is arrived," offered the Governor, "that the Colonies can expect to be invited to send an agent to negotiate their more than important concerns at the Court of Great Britain, it will be truly glorious to the elected if happily they can be useful in obliterating those disquietudes which will shake the political elements of both countries into confusion and certain ruin, unless some American constitution is fixed." 33

Even though John Wentworth was strongly opposed to what he considered the inflammatory actions pursued in the colonies, he showed himself sympathetic to colonial grievances. Moreover, although Wentworth had not been inclined to consider constitutional issues, he now was convinced of the necessity of some kind of constitutional readjustment concerning the colonies. What he meant by an "American constitution" can only be surmised. It may be assumed, however, that he at least saw the need for a formal definition of the colonies' position within the British Empire, an unambiguous statement of colonial rights, privileges, and responsibilities drawn up with an eye to resolving those differences that had so estranged America from the mother country. Wentworth may have been influenced by a proposal put forth at the Philadelphia Congress by Joseph
Galloway, a delegate from Pennsylvania. Attempting to salvage the ties between the colonies and Great Britain, Galloway's plan of union called for a separate American legislature, a Grand Council, which would deal exclusively with all policy involving both the colonies and Britain. The approval of this body would be needed, along with that of Parliament, for the passage of any measure. The Congress rejected Galloway's plan, but for others such a proposal represented the only possibility for preventing a complete break between England and America.

Among those in Britain supportive of the idea was the Colonial Secretary, Lord Dartmouth. "The Idea of a Union upon some general constitutional Plan," he declared, "is certainly very just and I have no doubt of its' being yet attainable, thro' some channel of mutual consideration and discussion."

As an associate of the Rockingham group at the time of the Stamp Act and a moderate man, Dartmouth's commitment to this kind of solution would not have surprised John Wentworth. Nevertheless, he could not expect Dartmouth, standing alone within a Ministry that had shown little willingness to make concessions of any sort to the colonies, to undertake an effective plan of accommodation. What encouraged Wentworth to think that a reasonable settlement might yet be found was his still persistent hope that the Rockingham Whigs would again head the government. A Parliamentary election had been scheduled for the end of November. Informed by his English sources, Wentworth expected the notorious John Wilkes to win a seat from Middlesex. Wilkes, like other English radicals, was vehemently opposed to the coercive measures that had been instituted against the
colonies during 1774. If the election went strongly in favor of this opposition, George III might be compelled to form a new Ministry, one more moderate in its approach to the colonies. Thus the prospect of Wilkes sitting in the Commons led Wentworth to conclude that if there were "many such changes in the new Parliament the administration of 1766 will grow again into power."35

Clearly John Wentworth did not envision the use of force as the answer to the British-colonial crisis. A lasting relationship had to be built on mutual agreement, trust, and, as he had told Rockingham in 1765, common advantage. He realized by late 1774, though, that any agreement would have to include some alteration of the constitutional structure of the Empire. He accepted that and had hopes that the Rockingham Whigs, who might provide the initiative for such a move, would be returned to office. In the meantime, though, peace and order had to be maintained so that all chances for a reasonable settlement were not destroyed. To this end Wentworth was willing to provide support for General Gage's army, obviously an unpopular move but the price, he believed, that one who "loves both countrys so much" had to be willing to pay. His was a precarious position. Nevertheless, he stoically advised Thomas Waldron, any man devoted to reconciling the two sides had to remain "inconscious of the imminent dangers that hang around the honorable precipice he must tread."36

Unfortunately for Wentworth, the Parliamentary elections did not provide the results he had hoped for. Wilkes did, indeed, gain his seat in the Commons and was even elected as
Lord Mayor of London. But in the rest of the House there was no slackening of support for the colonial policies of George III and Lord North. Wentworth had to concede "it is very probable the administration are stronger in Parliament now than in the last." Since the King and North had by now decided that hostilities were inevitable, there appeared little hope for peace. It was, in fact, a royal directive based on this attitude that very shortly brought New Hampshire, for the first time, to the forefront of the revolutionary movement. On October 19 the King issued a proclamation forbidding the export of arms or munitions from Britain to the colonies. At the same time he commanded all royal governors to prevent the importation of war materials from any place. News of these orders reached America by early December causing immediate apprehension among those who most feared British use of force against the colonies. In Rhode Island the Governor, one of only two in the colonies not royally appointed, ordered the removal of all armaments from Fort George in Newport to the relative security of Providence. Action taken in New Hampshire was even more drastic.

At four o'clock in the winter dusk of Tuesday, December 13, Paul Revere arrived in Portsmouth after a hurried ride from Boston with a message from that town's Committee of Correspondence. Finding Samuel Cutts of the Portsmouth Committee walking on the Parade near the Statehouse, Revere hustled him into Stoodley's Tavern. There he imparted his urgent news of the royal proclamation forbidding the importation of arms into the colonies, Rhode Island's reaction, and the even more pressing
intelligence that on Sunday a number of British troops had surreptitiously boarded ships in Boston. Conjecture was, Revere related, that the ships and soldiers were bound for the Piscataqua to seize the arms and munitions at Fort William and Mary. The news was quickly spread and by noon the following day Wentworth heard drums reverberating in the streets. He soon learned that volunteers were being summoned to remove the powder and cannon from the fort before the British could do the same. Distressed but not surprised, the Governor had already warned Captain Cochran at the Castle to be on his guard.38

Wentworth now dispatched Chief Justice Atkinson to the Parade to disperse the gathering crowd. Upon confronting the people Atkinson could obtain no answer as to their purpose. He then informed them he knew full well their intention and warned that any move against the fort would constitute an "Act of High Treason and Rebellion." With that he ordered them to disband. No one moved. Major John Langdon, Woodbury Langdon's brother, then stepped forward and, after openly ridiculing the old man, led the assembled men off on their mission. Wentworth frantically called in the Council but could not persuade them to accompany him to the fort. Determined to go himself he could find no one to man his barge. Sheriff Parker could not even obtain a messenger to alert Captain Cochran of the approaching mob.39 Here was proof, if the Governor needed it, to justify his assertion of a month earlier that government in New Hampshire was "totally prostrated."
In the meantime John Cochran had been having his own trouble. Shortly before noon several residents of Newcastle ambled into the fort to, as they said, warm themselves and visit the Commander. But when the sentry reported more men approaching from different directions, Cochran told his visitors, "I wonder much at your Coming now, as you have never before been to see Me since my living here almost four Years." Sarah Cochran, astutely suspecting the men had come to overpower her husband and capture the Castle, slipped him a pair of loaded pistols. After ordering the men out of the Fort, Cochran hurried his five soldiers to defensive preparations and pressed a sixth man into service, Elijah Locke of Rye, who unhappily had chosen that time to come to the fort on business.  

By one o'clock a great crowd including the men from Newcastle, those who had marched from Portsmouth, and others from across the river in Kittery, had formed at the gates of Fort William and Mary. When John Langdon stepped forth as the group's spokesman and demanded the gunpowder stored in the magazine, Cochran, as he later remembered, snapped that "they must produce the Governor's Orders for it. Langdon replied they had forgot to bring his Orders, but the Powder they were determined to have at all Events. I replied they must take it by Violence for that I would defend it to the last Extremity." Moments later a signal was given and some 400 men stormed the walls on all sides. Cochran ordered his soldiers to fire but the cannon balls and musket shot hit no one. Bracing himself against a wall, the Captain tried to fend the attackers off and even his wife, wielding a bayonet, attempted to help.
Nevertheless, seven men and a woman were no match for hundreds. They were soon overpowered "whereupon," remembered Cochran later, the invaders "gave three Huzzas or Cheers and hauled down the King's Colours." They proceeded to break open the magazine and carry off a hundred barrels of gunpowder leaving one behind.\(^41\)

On receipt of the news of these events from Cochran that evening, John Wentworth frantically dashed off a message to General Gage. He stressed the complete ineffectiveness of government in New Hampshire without "some strong ships of war in this harbour." He also reported that a call had gone out to other towns to help remove the cannon and arms which still remained at the fort. The following morning the Governor called in his Council, the magistrates, and militia officers and ordered that thirty men be raised to go with him to protect the Castle in the afternoon. Again, not one man answered the call. "Fear," Wentworth painfully observed, "had possessed those that were out of the rebellion." At one o'clock he received word that 500 men were coming into Portsmouth with Major John Sullivan at their head. Wentworth sent for Sullivan who explained to him that they were operating on the belief that British ships and soldiers were expected momentarily with the intention of seizing the arms and artillery at the fort. Wentworth vehemently denied this report and ordered the Major to disperse the crowd. Sullivan conferred with the people and returned to the Governor with a committee which included John Langdon. They stated that since the removal of the powder had been intended as strictly a defensive measure, if the Governor
would promise pardons to those who had participated on the previous day the people gathered in town might be convinced to return to their homes. Had John Wentworth's characteristic prudence prevailed at this point he might have avoided a second assault on the King's fort which he had no other power to prevent. By this time, however, frustration led to anger and clinging to a sense of duty which was all that remained of his authority as Governor, he exploded that "it was the height of absurdity to suppose this little Colony cou'd oppose the vengeance of Great Britain, or escape it's just resentment for an insult upon it's Honor and Government, which all the States of Europe wou'd not offer with impunity." Under no circumstances would he pardon those who had attacked Fort William and Mary. With that, Sullivan and the others went off to Tilton's Tavern to drink some flip and consider what should be done.42

Wentworth heard nothing more until about seven o'clock when a messenger reported that over 1000 men were marching into Portsmouth from other New Hampshire towns and that another 600 were coming from Berwick and Kittery in Maine. This news, he also found out, had encouraged John Sullivan and his party to embark in gundalows for Newcastle. Arriving at the gates of the fort at ten o'clock, Sullivan announced that they had come to take possession of the stores belonging to the province. Cochran realized by this time that he could put up no defense, so he told the Major he would let in ten men providing they took only what belonged to the province and not the King. This, he stated, "consisted only of forty or fifty old useless
Musquets and some inconsiderable small stores of no value." Sullivan agreed and the gates were opened. The ten men proceeded inside but the others followed after them and set about appropriating as much of the fort's ordinance as they could move. Working through the night as John Cochran looked on helplessly, Sullivan's men by eight o'clock the next morning had loaded "Sixteen pieces of Cannon, ten Carriages and about forty two Musquets with shot and other Military stores" onto their gundalows to be carried upriver and distributed through the countryside. By the time the cannon reached Portsmouth the tide was too low to proceed any further. A large body of armed men on foot and horseback thus remained in the capital during the sixteenth under the direction of Nathaniel Folsom, New Hampshire's other delegate to the Philadelphia Congress, to insure that no attempts were made to recapture the booty from the fort. Wentworth went to meet the Council at noon, but while inside the Statehouse eighty armed men were trooped in front of the door. The mood in Portsmouth was no longer merely defiant, but aggressively hostile toward all Crown officers and sympathizers. No longer was there any pretence of respect for the Governor or for any royal authority. To Wentworth's order that the men disperse shot back the retort that the people were "Subjects of King George and not King James." The men refused to move. Wentworth was allowed to proceed through them to his home but he was concerned for his own safety. He gave credence to a rumor that the mob "propos'd to load with Ball and kill all the Tories--meaning the Governor and Council."
Only "some unknown caprice or other," he believed, prevented this from happening. That evening on the high tide the guns were sent up the river and the crowd evacuated the town. The following night much to John Wentworth's relief, the armed British ship Canceaux arrived at the harbor mouth and hove to just off the Castle. Now the threats to carry off the remaining heavy cannon and raid the province treasury could not easily be carried out. Two days later, Monday, December 19, the man-of-war Scarborough joined the Canceaux in its vigil on the Piscataqua.

Peace had finally returned to New Hampshire but for John Wentworth this was small consolation. For the first time in the colonies the British flag had been ignominiously assaulted by the King's own subjects, and it had occurred in New Hampshire! This "insult" to the Crown, Wentworth told a friend, "grieves me to my soul." Making matters worse was the fact that this outrage against royal authority could not be attributed to the unthinking zeal of a motley rabble. The leaders of the raids were all men of substance. Naturally attempting to minimize the significance of these events for Lord Dartmouth, Wentworth described the New Hampshire radicals as people of "no considerable Rank in the Community." In his heart he knew that was not true. John Langdon was an important Portsmouth merchant. John Sullivan of Durham and Nathaniel Folsom of Exeter enjoyed enough prestige in the province to have been elected delegates to the Philadelphia Congress. Josiah Bartlett of Kingston, physician, Colonel in the militia, and member of the Assembly, had been ready to march to the fort
at a moment's notice. Stephen Batson, who pried open the powder magazine with a crowbar on the night of the fourteenth, was the brother-in-law of George Meserve, the Collector of the port. One contemporary observer was probably only slightly exaggerating when he described the participants as men "of the best property and note in the Province."^45

John Wentworth's frustration was even greater because he realized there was little prospect of bringing the offenders to justice. Although he issued a proclamation the day after Christmas calling for the arrest and punishment of those who took part in the raids, Wentworth told Dartmouth that they could never be kept in jail and, even if they could be detained, no jury would convict them. This reflected his realization that sentiment in New Hampshire was now overwhelmingly against Great Britain. That resentment, of course, also carried over to all Crown officers including himself. As a result he felt extremely isolated and vulnerable. The only people he could still count on for support he could number on one hand—Councillors Rindge and Jaffrey, his secretary Thomas Macdonogh, Colonel John Fenton, and his brother-in-law Benning Wentworth. In describing the assaults on the fort he complained that "Not even the Revenue officers" came forth to help. "All chose to shrink in safety from the storm and suffered me to remain exposed to the folly and madness of an enraged multitude."

The arrival of the two British warships did nothing to diminish Wentworth's fear for his own safety and that of his few supporters. He believed that a plan had been devised by "our Junto," in case of open warfare, "to secure . . . and to
expose us for a cover in their battle, or to destroy in revenge."

The Scarborough and the Canceaux, lying three miles downriver opposite the Castle, would afford little protection against this kind of attack. Thus Wentworth wrote to both General Gage and Admiral Samuel Graves, Commander of the British squadron at Boston, asking for an additional sloop-of-war with a contingent of forty to fifty marines. Such a vessel, the Governor explained, could "lay over to the Island opposite to our Church where there is a fine place in deep water, an Eddy out of the tide, Ice or other harm." Without this commitment, he continued, "I am convinc'd . . . That very deplorable mischiefs may be reasonably expected in this Town and Province." Unfortunately for Wentworth, Admiral Graves believed his naval forces already too thinly dispersed and could not seriously consider the New Hampshire Governor's request.46

John Wentworth feared not only for his own safety but even more so for that of his wife, Frances, who was expecting the birth of a child at any moment. Hard as she tried, she could not keep from crying and her emotional state visibly affected him. He found that "the starting tears often . . . made me fly from their powerful influence." Certainly there was good reason for Wentworth to be despondent and it is not surprising to find a fatalistic note in his thoughts at this time. Making preparations to send four hogsheads of run and molasses to his Wolfeboro estate, he declared to Thomas Waldron: "I shall not delay sending stores to W[entworth]' House, notwithstanding all the menaces. If it is destroy'd, let all go
together." Yet John had not abandoned hope for a resolution of his difficult situation. He had an unremitting faith in the durability and necessity of British-American ties. "All accounts agree," he stated as the eventful year drew to a close, "that America must be seriously considered and establish'd in connection to Britain." Wentworth continued to believe that somehow a practical, reasonable solution could be worked out. Aware that the current Ministry was determined to use force if necessary, he was not sure Parliament would make the grants to support that policy. The government might thus be induced to offer a constitutional compromise that the colonies could accept, one he had hoped the Rockingham Whigs would be in a position to make.

Wentworth meanwhile was determined to maintain his composure and not be forced into unwise or precipitate actions. "My mind," he told Waldron, "ought in such times to have no feelings of its own, and I think had not very many except those brought by Frances' tears." The balance of the man can be seen in his declared determination to "act with firmness, inflexible, equally distant from temerity and timidity." He was relaxed enough to take the time to read with a critic's eye the second manuscript chapter of his friend Jeremy Belknap's History of New Hampshire. Wentworth was even able to summon enough good cheer to offer General Gage and his family "best wishes for many happy Returns of the Season." The winter months of the new year, however, brought no relief for John Wentworth's pervading sense of gloom. By the middle of January, 1775, he was convinced that to have any hope
of arresting the men who attacked the fort and to protect himself and other royal officers he would need two regiments of British regulars. With the utmost secrecy he sent Thomas Macdonoghp off to request these troops from General Gage. In the meantime he endeavored to organize a group of followers bound to his and each other's support in case of attack. On January 17 a mutual protection association was signed by fifty-nine men. Despite the fact that many of them were Crown officers, local officials, close friends and relatives, all of whom Wentworth could have expected to join, he must have been pleased with the relatively large number who finally signed the document. Nevertheless, he had no illusion that sentiment in Portsmouth was becoming more favorable toward Britain and royal government. The next day, he reported to Gage, a mob broke into a small shopkeeper's house and, discovering seventy pounds of tea, forced the man to publicly burn it in the center of town.49

One week later, on January 25, a second provincial congress met in Exeter. In an obvious affront to royal authority, the members chose John Langdon and John Sullivan, respective leaders of the two raids on the fort, as New Hampshire's delegates to the Second Continental Congress scheduled for Philadelphia on May 10. The Exeter congress also prepared an address to the people of the province expressing regret that they had been deprived of a representative Assembly for the previous ten months. As the only person legally empowered to summon an Assembly, John Wentworth clearly was implicated in what the congress warned the people was a concerted plan
"adopted by the British Ministry for enslaving you." The congress' exhortation to the provincial militia units to be alert and prepared, the same militia that Wentworth had been totally helpless to raise in December, provided evidence that the reins of effective government in New Hampshire had passed wholly out of the hands of the Governor, Council and Assembly, and into those of the ad hoc group meeting in Exeter.50

Wentworth received a report that during the congress John Sullivan, "the Durham hero" as he called him, had moved to petition the Governor to call a new Assembly, one that this time would not be dissolved. Responding to Sullivan's challenge, probably in hopes of regaining some of his lost credibility, Wentworth on January 28 issued election writs for an Assembly to convene on February 23. Encouraging this move was word he had received two days earlier that General Gage was sending an officer, in civilian clothing, to confer with him about quartering the troops he had requested. With soldiers behind him the Governor would be able to control any difficult situation that might arise out of the meeting of the Assembly. Wentworth had hopes, though, that the new House would be moderate in its make-up. He was, in fact, so concerned with that end that he took special measures to achieve it. To the list of towns designated to receive election writs he added the names of three small communities in the northwest part of the province, Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme. Doubtless hoping that observers would overlook the fact that he had bypassed many older, larger, and more deserving towns, Wentworth probably believed that this extension of writs would lessen the grounds for complaints about
lack of representativeness in New Hampshire's Assembly. More important for his immediate purposes, however, these towns were likely to support him and in at least one, Plymouth, he was assured of a favorable representative.51

Indeed, on February 17, the freeholders of Plymouth elected John Fenton to represent them in the General Assembly. Fenton, although Judge of Probate, Clerk of the Inferior Court, and Colonel of the 11th Regiment of Militia in Grafton County, preferred the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of Portsmouth where he spent much of his time. In recent months, serving as a magistrate in the capital, he had become one of John Wentworth's closest friends and strongest supporters. Wentworth told Gage after the raids on the fort that he would fear nothing if he had "two hundred such men" as Colonel Fenton. By his outspoken manner, however, Fenton had created a multitude of enemies in Portsmouth. His choice by Plymouth, moreover, was for Wentworth the only cheering note to emerge from the elections. Instead of a reasonable group that he might deal with, he found that one third of the new House was comprised of "the Principal Instigators and Ringleaders in the Attack on the Fort." Making matters worse, his extension of election writs backfired. "A Spectator" in the New Hampshire Gazette accused Wentworth of favoring only those towns where he had "plenty of Placemen," new areas that were "chiefly dependent on the Province for their Sustenance." This was especially true of Grafton County which had received all its "Lands and Grants," Spectator observed slyly, "you know where and how." But even there, he caustically continued in mock address to the Governor, "be sure not to send
any /writs/ to Haverhill, Hanover, or Lebanon; whereas they are the oldest, strongest, and most independent, . . . but send them to Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme." Considering the composition of the new Assembly and this prevailing attitude of strong distrust and antagonism toward himself, Wentworth realized that it would be folly to allow the House to sit. On February 22, the day before the Assembly's scheduled opening, he postponed it until the fourth of May. He hoped that in the intervening period, with the help of troops dispatched by General Gage, he could arrest those newly elected members who had participated in the assaults on Fort William and Mary. Several days later, however, he received another blow when Gage, who had originally thought Wentworth wanted soldiers only temporarily, informed him that he would be unable to provide any troops in the near future.52

One bright spot did appear for Wentworth amidst the depressing developments of those dreary winter months. On January 20 Frances Wentworth gave birth to a baby boy. Frances had a difficult delivery, seventeen hours of the "severest natural labor" that the attending physician, Dr. Hall Jackson, could remember. Once mother and child were safe, though, the Governor exulted in this "joyful event." Ships guns were fired in the harbor and for a week friends, relatives, and officers from the Scarborough and Canceaux came to the house to extend congratulations and celebrate with "cake and caudle wine." "The Governor's happiness seems to be complete," observed Elizabeth Wentworth, Frances' mother who was living with them in Portsmouth, "and had a young Prince been born, there could
not have been more rejoicing." But even this happy occasion could not escape the taint of the province's deteriorating political situation. John Wentworth had pegged Hall Jackson as his enemy since the Livius controversy. Although he respected Jackson's skill as a physician, he was sure that the Doctor was operating as a spy for John Sullivan. The antipathy between the two men was barely veiled while Jackson attended Frances' labor. In a deliberate slight the Doctor spent his waiting time in the servants' quarters rather than in the parlor with the Governor. Wentworth accepted this but later remarked disparagingly about the "Obstetric anecdotes, surgery, military instruction, and political phantoms" that Jackson had entertained his staff with. Such "evacuations of . . . mental dysentary" John was convinced would only hurt Sullivan's cause.53

In spite of the terrible strain he was under, Wentworth did not retreat into bitterness. He did not blame the majority of the people most of whom, he felt, had been misled or coerced. There had been moderate men at Exeter, but they had been silenced by "an uncontrouled dictatorial power." Many he believed to be "innocently wicked," unaware of the enormity of their actions. Characteristically, too, John Wentworth did not place all the blame on the American side. He ruminated on the probability that, had Parliament been satisfied merely to pass the Declaratory Act without attempting to demonstrate its legislative right over the colonies, "the present difficultys might have never arisen." That had been the moderate, practical position of the Rockingham Whigs in 1766 and, though John
Wentworth doubtless realized the clock could not be turned back, he still clung to a desperate hope that there might yet be "ground left for an amnesty."\textsuperscript{54}

It was appropriate that Wentworth named his new-born son Charles Mary, after Lord and Lady Rockingham, for in England the Rockinghamites, still pursuing the kinds of policies he admired and which had formed so much of his own thinking, were working feverishly for an accommodation with the colonies in an effort to avoid war. In the Commons in March, Edmund Burke presented a brilliant speech with a detailed plan for conciliation based on repeal of the laws obnoxious to the Americans and the admittance of "the people of our colonies into an interest in the constitution." Of this effort Lady Rockingham wrote Frances Wentworth: "I beleive the Wise, and Moderate, deem'd those propositions offer'd by Mr. Burke to approach as nearly to an acceptable conciliation on both sides as the sad difficulty of the Case admitted." John and Frances Wentworth, however, were not the only ones facing arbitrary belligerence. Opinions had hardened in England as well as America and Burke's propositions were resoundingly voted down. It appeared too late for compromise and events in the colonies were soon to bear this out.\textsuperscript{55}

Conditions were bad in New Hampshire but in Massachusetts, where the most radical colonial opponents of Britain stood face to face with the King's troops, things were much worse. By early April a revolutionary, military government had completely supplanted regular government in the Bay colony. General Gage concluded that a show of force must be made. He was encouraged
in this decision by a letter from Dartmouth highly critical of his failure to take some decisive action. Thus, after nightfall on April 18, 700 British infantry and grenadiers set out from Boston to seize a cache of colonial military supplies known to be located at Concord, some twenty miles to the west.

On the morning of the nineteenth as they marched into the town of Lexington, the soldiers saw ahead of them on the green a sizeable number of colonials all carrying arms. These Massachusetts "minute-men" had been warned of the British advance and were determined, ill-equipped as they were, to stop it. When they refused to disperse, shots were fired and eight colonists were killed and more wounded. The troops moved on to Concord, but Lexington marked the beginning of an all-day running battle in which the British took heavy losses from enraged but determined Americans who fired on them along the entire route back to Boston. Of far greater significance, the shots fired at Lexington proved to be the first in a long and costly war between Great Britain and her colonies, a conflict that culminated in the creation of an independent American nation.

News of the fighting traveled fast and in New Hampshire it brought immediate action. On the twentieth Portsmouth voted to form two military companies of fifty men each, ready to march at a moment's notice. The following day an emergency provincial congress met at Exeter. Working in secrecy the delegates chose Nathaniel Folsom to lead volunteers from New Hampshire, many of whom had already left to join the colonial
army forming at Cambridge. They also appointed a committee to consult with the Massachusetts congress on the number of men that would be required from New Hampshire and any other measures that might be deemed necessary. Feeling ran high throughout the province. On the Connecticut River John Hurd declared that the people of Haverhill "burn . . . to revenge the innocent blood" shed at Lexington and Concord. Even John Wentworth's friend, the normally reserved Eleazar Wheelock, denounced the events in Massachusetts as "horrid murders and savage butcheries . . . inhumanly committed under pretense of reducing rebels to obedience." Wentworth could only watch as the situation grew progressively "more violent."56

John Wentworth had gained nothing by postponing the Assembly. No troops had been sent and when the House convened on May 4, conditions were decidedly worse than they had been in February. Almost immediately a question was raised as to the legality of the Governor's issuance of election writs to the three new towns. A committee was chosen to look into the matter and Wentworth, though reluctant, had no choice but to accede to the Assembly's wish for an adjournment until early June.57 In the meantime all semblance of the old order in Portsmouth totally disintegrated. By the middle of May the town resembled an armed camp. Those with even remote ties to royal government lived, with some justification, in constant fear.

On the evening of Saturday, May 13, a heavily armed crowd of about sixty men strode into Portsmouth from the country. They roamed the streets avowedly in search of "Obnoxious Tories."
Finding several men who, they believed, fit that description, they detained them and forced them to recant all allegiances to the Crown. The principal officers and friends of royal government, some twenty in all, soon got word of what was happening and fled to the Governor's house. There they remained keeping a constant watch throughout the night. In the morning the outsiders finally left town, some to join the colonial forces at Cambridge, others to harass supposed "tories" in the countryside. Wentworth later learned that their ultimate goal had been to capture the Scarborough. One plan, he discovered, was to make prisoners of himself and Andrew Barkley, Captain of the Scarborough, who dined regularly at his home. The two were to be used as hostages, each at the head of a boat full of men intent on seizing the ship. According to Joseph Cilley of Nottingham whose plan it was, if the Governor and Captain refused to order the sailors to give up the vessel, their captors "would blow their brains out." The design failed, so Wentworth understood, because of the mob's failure to recruit more volunteers in town. The immediate danger had ended but fear did not abate. A rotating watch of four men each was maintained at the Governor's house. George Meserve and Robert Trail, respectively Collector and Comptroller of the Customs who both spent the night of the thirteenth at Wentworth's home, reported to their superiors that "every day ... brings fresh terrors with it to the friends of Government." John Wentworth characterized the mood in Portsmouth as one of "continual apprehension and alarm."
It is not surprising that on May 17 he informed Dartmouth that "Government is in a great measure unhinged, for though the form as yet remains I am exceedingly concerned to acquaint your Lordship that there is not much of the reality." Wentworth, of course, was referring to royal government. On that same day, however, a fourth congress convened at Exeter and, ignoring the Governor and the fact that an Assembly was officially in session, though adjourned, it assumed the functions of governing the province. The congress voted to raise 2000 men and taxes "in the same proportion as was last used in Levying and proportioning the Taxes of this Province." The provincial Committee of Safety was given executive responsibilities, another committee was authorized to borrow £10,000 on the credit of the colony, and a provincial post office was created. 59

It now was clear there was going to be war. With that realization came a growing intolerance of any view considered unfavorable to the colonies. On May 19 the provincial congress warned the local committees of safety to watch for "persons who, through inadvertence, wilful malice, or immoderate heat, have thrown out many opprobrious expressions respecting the several Congresses, and the methods of security they have thought proper to adopt." Three days later the Congress issued a summons to John Wentworth's friend, John Penton. Fenton was to appear and explain a letter he had written to the people of Grafton County following the events at Lexington and Concord. He had advised his constituents to stay at home and tend their fields, and warned them of information he had that if they
took up arms they would be attacked by Canadians and Indians. Declining to appear in person, Fenton answered in writing that his statements were based on "opinion only."\(^{60}\)

Within a few days Wentworth himself was singled out for ostracism. Verifying his suspicion that his mail was being intercepted, on May 22 John Sullivan and John Langdon wrote to the provincial congress from Philadelphia that on their return to New Hampshire "we shall bring with us Governor Wentworth's Letters to Lord Dartmouth for 12 months past that you may Judge whether he is your friend as he pretends or whether he is not Rather your Inveterate Enemy." The congress did not take long to decide. The delegates soon discovered Wentworth's request to General Gage for British soldiers and expressed to him their shock at "your Excellency sending for troops to destroy the lives, liberties, and properties you have solemnly engaged to defend and protect." Within a short time "Speaking favourable of Governor Wentworth" was considered a treasonable act.\(^{61}\)

As the month of May drew to a close, violence again threatened to erupt in Portsmouth. On the twenty-ninth two boats from Long Island bearing corn, flour, pork, and other supplies were seized by the Scarborough at the mouth of the harbor. A group of town citizens immediately petitioned the Governor to have the boats released. The provisions, they argued, were destined for the poor of Portsmouth who were in great need. Wentworth, backed by several members of the Council who feared that the seizure would produce more "violent outrages and Tumults," went out to the Scarborough and personally asked Barkley that the boats be freed. The Captain, however, was
adamant. He had received his orders and he would follow them. The Restraining Act, passed by Parliament in March, called for the interdiction of all New England trade except that with Britain which the colonists themselves had cut off. Wentworth doubtless believed, as did his Council, that the act could not possibly apply to foodstuffs needed to prevent starvation of the people in the colony. Barkley, however, rightly interpreted the intent of the act to mean all trade, and on the thirtieth he sent the two boats full of provisions to Boston. 62

That night some 600 men went to the battery positioned at Jerry's Point, about a mile from the fort on Newcastle Island, and brought eight of the large cannon there upriver to Portsmouth. Barkley in turn sent a large number of his sailors to the fort to begin tearing it down. The following day mobs of armed and angry men roamed the streets of Portsmouth in search of guns and powder. They "rummaged several private houses," Wentworth reported, and even came to his own door "but on being refused admittance they went off." He again believed their purpose was to capture the detested Scarborough and her "swaggering scotch Captain," as one inhabitant referred to Barkley. Barkley warned that if any attempt were made to annoy his ship he would fire directly on the town. Moreover, on the same day he made the situation worse himself by impressing twenty local fishermen. Tension was everywhere in the air. 63

On the night of June 1 one of the Scarborough's boats, rowed by sailors and commanded by an officer, was making its regular patrol on the river. As it moved in close to the Newcastle shore a voice rang out in the darkness. "Row to the
bank and get out!" Momentarily surprised, the crew refused then frantically hauled for the open water. With that some forty men secreted behind a fence stood up and simultaneously fired at the boat. Two sailors were slightly wounded before they were safely out of range. After the crew reached the ship and reported the incident, the Scarborough, in protest, fired three of her guns at the Island. Open warfare between the town and the Scarborough now threatened to erupt at any moment. The next day, however, the selectmen of Portsmouth apologized to Wentworth. Discountenancing the unseemly attack on the ship's boat, they promised to attempt to bring the men to justice. Wentworth passed this information on to Barkley who agreed to release the fishermen. A temporary truce seemed to have been reached, but it clearly was only temporary. John Wentworth by this time was little more than a hostage in his own town.

The Assembly convened on the twelfth as scheduled, but did not take up any business until the following day. On June 13 the first item considered was the eligibility of the three new members from Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme. Adhering to a committee opinion that the Governor had no right under the English constitution to issue new election writs without the consent of the legislature, the representatives voted not to seat the new men. Wentworth ignored this and in his message to the Assembly instead concentrated once more on the drastic need for conciliation between the colonies and Great Britain. Moreover, he offered what he believed to be a sound basis for agreement, a resolution passed by the House of Commons on
February 27. Devised by the North Ministry, the resolution offered to rescind all taxes for any colony that raised its proportionate share for defense and provided support for its own government. Wentworth told the representatives this indicated a "great . . . affection, and tenderness for your liberties and Readiness to be Reconciled upon Principles, consistent with the just Rights and Dignity of the Parent State and the Privileges of the Colonies."^65

That John Wentworth at this point should be desperately grasping at straws is understandable. His advancement and praise of North's resolution, however, indicates an insensitivity to colonial thinking by this time. Much more was now involved than just the question of taxation that had seemed central to the dispute between the colonies and Great Britain in 1765. Ten years of continuing conflict had raised many more issues—the vice-admiralty courts, the prerogative of royal governors, colonial rights of manufacturing and export, and others—which called into question the entire British-American relationship. In spite of his acceptance of the probable necessity of some kind of constitutional realignment, Wentworth seemed not to realize how fundamental a change would be needed to now reconcile the colonies with the mother country. Not only were basic liberties at stake, the long struggle had awakened in the colonists a sense of autonomy. The kind of comprehensive authority exercised by the British Government in the past would no longer be acceptable. In 1765 the resolution might have worked; by 1775 it had little chance of success.
This was especially true since the Restraining Act made the Ministry's offer appear more like coercion than conciliation. It also was obvious that the resolution had been designed to deal with the colonies on an individual basis in an effort to break down the solidarity they had forged. The opposition in England, including John's friend, Edmund Burke, criticized the resolution as a sham with little sincerity behind it and almost no chance of leading to a settlement. In Parliament David Hartley called it "not free but compulsory; it is attended with menaces and threats . . . . To say, Give me as much money as I wish, till I say enough, or I will take it from you, and then to call such a proposition conciliatory for peace, is insult added to oppression." Although he was much closer to the American situation, John Wentworth was not so perceptive. He was, however, in a much more difficult position than the friends of America in England. The Commons resolution may have seemed to him the only remaining possibility for avoiding imminent disaster. Accordingly, on the afternoon of June 13, in order to provide time for "candid consideration" of the proposal by both representatives and their constituents, Wentworth adjourned the Assembly until the eleventh of July.65

Less time than John Wentworth could have expected was given over to consideration of the resolution. That evening as Frances Wentworth sat penning a letter to Lady Rockingham while her husband and John Fenton, who had dined with them, commiserated over recent events, word arrived that the house was about to be attacked. Within moments a mob was heard outside the front door screaming demands that Fenton surrender
himself. Already highly unpopular because of his letter to Grafton County warning residents there not to take up arms, Fenton had that day insured popular enmity. In the Assembly he had advocated acceptance of Lord North's resolution. Worse, he roundly castigated the representatives after they voted to exclude the three new members, including himself. Wentworth opened the door and courageously asserted that he would not give Colonel Fenton up. This only enraged those outside. They pounded on the house with clubs and, after hauling up a large cannon and aiming it directly at the front door, announced that no one would escape with his life, including the Governor's wife and baby, if resistance continued. This was too much for Fenton. He walked out the door and turned himself over to the mob. That night he was forced to march the fifteen miles to Exeter where he was to be confined until the provincial congress could sit in judgment on his activities.67

This violent experience also deeply affected John Wentworth. With his family's safety in jeopardy as well as his own, "Finding every Idea of the Respect due to His Majesty's Commission . . . lost in the frantic Rage and Fury of the People," he no longer believed he could stay in Portsmouth. No sooner had Fenton been hurried away than John herded Frances and their five-month-old son out the back door and down to the pond. There they boarded their boat and pushed off for Fort William and Mary three miles downriver where they would be safe under the protective guns of the Scarborough. Shortly after their departure the mob returned and ransacked the Governor's house. Frances later accorded credence to rumors of disappointment that they had not been there and alleged
claims by the rioters that "if they cou'd get The Governor's 

fat Child they wou'd split him down the Back and broil him."68

Forced to take refuge at Fort William and Mary, John Wentworth was now clearly an outcast from New Hampshire society. He had been deemed an enemy by his own people. Yet he refused to believe this a majority opinion. His friends, of whom he felt there were many, had been cowed by the rash actions of a few hotheaded radicals. He was confident that with some British soldiers behind him the populace would not hesitate to speak out in his favor. But Wentworth misjudged the general sentiment of the province. He seemed not to take into account that the militia, his normal source of armed support, had refused to come to his aid. Nevertheless, he still had hopes Gage would send troops. He would then be able to return to town and maintain control of New Hampshire until the difficulties were settled, either by force or negotiation. On June 23 Admiral Graves encouraged him to think that an armed schooner would soon be on its way to the Piscataqua to back up the Scarborough. But four days later, when Captain Barkley informed him of orders he had to dismantle the fort, Wentworth must have had a haunting suspicion that the British were abandoning New Hampshire. He was reluctant to agree, but had no choice.

Within the next two days all of the remaining cannon and military stores were loaded on a sloop-of-war and carried to Boston.69

With his own defenses seemingly being pulled from around him, Wentworth could only look on helplessly as events in the province began to look more and more like revolution.
Early in July he received word that a large body of people had ransacked his house at Wolfeboro, and had barely been dissuaded from putting it to the torch. John Fenton had been declared an enemy and sent to Connecticut for confinement. Others were threatened with the same. Even more disturbing was the rapid rate at which the provincial Congress was moving into the vacuum left by the absence of royal government. On July 1 a committee from the congress visited George Jaffrey, Councillor and province Treasurer, and forced him to turn over all the money in the Treasury. They left a receipt for £1516. Within the next week similar committees of the congress called on other officials and collected all the provincial records. John Wentworth was sensitive to what he considered this blatant usurpation of authority. When the Assembly reconvened just before the middle of July with scarcely enough members present to conduct business, Wentworth sent them a message from the fort asking that they withdraw their exclusion of the three new members from Grafton County. Upon the representatives' refusal, he pointedly adjourned rather than dissolve them so that the congress would not be left as the only governing body in the province.

Wentworth still feared that attempts would be made to take him captive. Nevertheless, he declined Barkley's offer of a detachment of marines due to the small living quarters within the fort. The Governor's party, including family, servants, friends, and six men employed to stand guard, numbered some twenty in all. He complained about the "inconvenience of being crowded into this miserable house, confined for room
and neither wind or water tight." An observer informed Eleazar Wheelock that "the poor Governor's situation at the sham Fort is truly deplorable." Given his political and physical situation, Wentworth had every reason to be bitter. That was not, however, consistent with the character of the man. On the last day of July he wrote to Tristram Dalton, "I will not complain because it wou'd be a poignant censure on a people I love and forgive."  

By the end of the first week in August Wentworth despaired of receiving any soldiers from Gage. The General's forces were rapidly being cordoned off in Boston by a mounting colonial army. At almost this same time a series of incidents shattered the truce that had been grudgingly worked out between the people of Portsmouth and HMS Scarborough. The town had agreed to supply the ship with beef in return for freedom to carry on fishing activities. This seemed to be working until one evening, after the ship's boat had come to town, one of the sailors deserted. The next morning Captain Barkley seized a man from a passing canoe and notified the town that he would not be released until the sailor was returned. Anger swept over the people; no one, they claimed, had encouraged Barkley's man to run away. The Captain did release the man a few days later, but feeling remained high against him.  

On the afternoon of August 10, as the ship's boat again touched the wharf, a group of armed men seized the coxswain and ordered the crew out. The sailors declined and shots were fired at them. They returned the fire and shoved off. No one had been hurt but the town was in an uproar. A boat that
Wentworth used to ferry supplies from Portsmouth to the fort was dragged out of the water by the mob at the wharf and carried through the streets. Their intention was to burn it but they were finally persuaded by some "Principal Inhabitants" to dispose of it in a creek behind the town. Other groups roamed the streets in search of "tories." Order finally was restored and that evening a town meeting declared the attack on the sailors a "rash and unwarrantable" action. A copy of this was sent, together with the coxswain, to the Scarborough's captain. This, however, was not enough to appease Barkley. He asked Wentworth if this was meant "as a Declaration of War against the King--and if so that immediate satisfaction would be demanded and the Consequence most likely would be fatal" to Portsmouth.74

On the eleventh Wentworth solicited a disavowal of the townsmen's actions from the Council, and the next day sent this along with his own apologies to Barkley. But even this did not satisfy the Captain. He told Wentworth that if the men who had fired on his boat were not delivered to him, he would take the Scarborough upriver and have "Vengeance" on the town. The situation worsened on August 12 when, about midnight, a party from the Scarborough attacked a group of men keeping watch in Newcastle. One man was wounded and another, whom town selectmen complained was poor and had a pregnant wife and six Children to care for, was carried off to the ship. No longer able to abide the insolence of the "swaggering scotch Captain," the Portsmouth Committee of Safety on the following day, August 13, declared an end to all communications with the
Scarborough, including boatloads of provisions. John Wentworth was the loser in this battle of wills, for Fort William and Mary was included in the ban.75

Wentworth was upset with the actions of the town, but he was equally frustrated by Barkley's intransigence. Time and again he had advocated reason and had tried to reconcile the two sides, even from his tenuous residence at the fort. But both ignored him. At least one astute bystander, Eleazar Wheelock's friend David McClure, expressed sympathy for the Governor's difficult position "as it were, between two fires." Since Barkley in retaliation had cut off all shipping in and out of the port, it now became a question of which, the town or the ship, could outlast the other. Unless a provision boat appeared, the odds were definitely in favor of the town.

By the seventeenth Wentworth and the others at the fort were beginning to feel the shortage of food. John asked the Newcastle selectmen for supplies, but they replied that they themselves were short of provisions and could not possibly help. The Scarborough was faring just as badly and on the twenty-second Barkley informed Wentworth that the ship would have to go to Boston to be reprovisioned. The Governor and his party were welcome to go if they wished. What choice did he have? None that he could see, for he was sure he would be taken prisoner without the support of the ship. On August 23 he sent a brief note to old Theodore Atkinson, in his absence the senior royal official in the province. "I find it necessary to go to sea for a few days, and must desire that in the mean time you will use your best endeavors to preserve peace and
quietness as much as possible." John Wentworth then boarded the Scarborough with his family and sailed out of Piscataqua harbor.76

Wentworth considered his departure only temporary. On reaching Boston, however, he soon found that Admiral Graves had no ships to spare for New Hampshire waters. He was nevertheless determined to maintain his official position, hollow as it was, as chief executive of the province. Nearly a month after he had left he boarded a British schooner in Boston. On September 21 Wentworth landed at Gosport on the Isles of Shoals, a few miles off Portsmouth harbor. That evening he sent a boat into town with a message for Atkinson and a proclamation proroguing the Assembly, scheduled to meet on the twenty-eighth, until April 24, 1776. The ship carried only a small force and, after receiving Atkinson's reply the next day, Wentworth again set sail from New Hampshire. He intended to return, he told Dartmouth, as soon as it was at all practicable to do so.77 Certainly by the time the Assembly met the following spring, order and royal authority would have been restored. But the New Hampshire Assembly never reconvened. John Wentworth never saw his native province again.
NOTES

CHAPTER IX

1 NHSP, 7:335.

2 Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, Feb. 1, 1774, Hammond Transcripts, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, fol. 7.

3 NHSP, 7:350-58.


6 Wentworth to Dartmouth, Apr. 22, 1774, Public Record Office, C.0.5/930; NHSP, 7:352; New Hampshire Gazette, March 18, 1774.


8 New Hampshire Gazette, Mar. 25, 1774.

9 NHSP, 7:334-35, 359-60; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Apr. 28 and 24, and Portsmouth instructions to its representatives, Apr. 12, 1774, PRO, C.0.5/938.

10 Henry Caner to Wentworth, Apr. 21, 1774, Caner Letter Book. On Parker, Sherburne, and Cutts, see Ransom B. True, "The New Hampshire Committees of Correspondence, 1773-1774" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1969), 38-55, 98-105. That Langdon was a controversial figure was evident by a debate in the New Hampshire Gazette between "An Independent Freeholder" who urged that he not be elected, and "Republicae Amicus" who replied that such opposition came only from a "Junto of Wiseacres" which he identified with the New Hampshire Council. New Hampshire Gazette, Mar. 25 and Apr. 1, 1774.
Wentworth to Dartmouth, Apr. 24, 1774, PRO, C.0.5/938.

Bernhard Knollenberg, Growth of the American Revolution, 1766-1775 (New York, 1975), 103-08.


Henry Caner to Wentworth, June 16, 1774, Caner Letter Book; Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution (New York, 1968 /1918/), 319, 325; Samuel Cutts for the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence, June, 1774, PRO, C.0.5/938 and HLRO, 1775, no. 284; Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, 2nd Ser. 2(1885-86): 481-86; Joseph B. Walker, "The New Hampshire Covenant of 1774," The Granite Monthly, 35(July, 1903): 188-97. Concord is the only town outside of Portsmouth known to have signed the covenant. (See Walker, "The New Hampshire Covenant.") For some reason that I cannot explain, the copy of the covenant sent by Wentworth to England differs in wording and date of implementation from the documents sent to Dover and Concord as published in the MHS, Proceedings and Walker, "The New Hampshire Covenant."

The following incident concerning the importation of tea into New Hampshire in June, 1774, is based largely on two sources, a letter, Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 4, 1774, printed in Jeremy Belknap, The History of New Hampshire (New York and London, 1970 /1831/), 2:314-15, and the following from HLRO, 1775, no. 284: Edward Parry to Wentworth, John Parker to Wentworth, and Wentworth to John Cochran, June 29, 1774; Cochran to Wentworth, June 30, 1774. Also see NHSP, 7:408, and New Hampshire Gazette, July 8, 1774.
Wentworth did not indicate whether the Councillor mentioned was Daniell or Jonathan Warner. See Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 4, 1774, in Belknap, History, 2:317.

Knollenberg, Growth of the American Revolution, 128; Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 6, 1774, in Belknap, History, 2:318-19; NHSP, 7:400.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 13, 1774, in Belknap, History, 2:319; NHSP, 7:407-08.


Dartmouth to Wentworth, July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 8, 1774, PRO, C.0.5/the first from 938, the latter two from 947; David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock, Aug. 24, 1774, The Papers of Eleazar Wheelock, Dartmouth College Archives, 774474; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Aug. 29, 1774, with enclosures, HLRO, 1775, no. 284. Wentworth's letter is printed alone in Belknap, History, 2:320-22.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, Sept. 13, Edward Parry to Wentworth, Sept. 8, Minutes of the Council, Sept. 9, 1774, HLRO, 1775, no. 284; NHSP, 7:415-16; Wentworth to Corbyn Morris, Nov. 16, 1774, Transcripts of John Wentworth Letter Book no. 3, New Hampshire Archives, 15.

Knollenberg, Growth of the American Revolution, 138-62. For the Suffolk Resolves see 249.


Wentworth's young friend from Concord, Benjamin Thompson, whom he had made a Major in the militia, was the person through whom the Governor was working to return British deserters. Thompson visited Gage early in November, but shortly after that was arrested and imprisoned in the town of Woburn, Massachusetts, as an enemy of the colonies. (See Wentworth to Gage, Nov. 2, 1774, Letter Book no. 3, 1, and NHSP, 7:419.) Thompson gained his release and, when the British Army finally evacuated Boston, he went to England. A scientist and inventor of repute, his story is one of the most successful of all Loyalists. During the Revolutionary War he served as under-Secretary of State to George Germain, was appointed a Lieutenant-Colonel in the King's Dragoons, and in 1784 was knighted. Moving to Munich, where he remained for eleven years serving in various positions of Bavarian service including Minister of War, he gained the title Count von Rumford. In 1799 Wentworth's old friend, John Adams, then President of the fledgling United States of America, asked Thompson to direct the new military academy at West Point but he declined. (Dictionary of National Biography, 19:685-88; New Hampshire Historical Society, Proceedings, 5(1917):312-17.) There are numerous biographies of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford.

Wentworth to Rockingham, Nov. 9, 1774, NEHGR, 23(1869):275; Eleazar Wheelock to Wentworth, Nov. 6, 1774, in Frederick Chase, The History of Dartmouth College and the Town of Hanover, ed. by John K. Lord (Cambridge, Mass., 1891), 1:324-25. Ironically Woodbury Langdon, always a trimmer, was at this time also procuring blankets for the British Army. See Mayo, John Langdon, 61. See also Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldron, Nov. 26, 1774, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891):66-67.

Wentworth to Captain Mowat, Nov. 7, and to Corbyn Morris, Nov. 16, 1774, Letter book no. 3, 3, 15; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Nov. 15, 1774, in Belknap, History, 2:327; Edward D. Boylston, Historical Sketch of the Hillsborough County Congresses (Amherst, N.H., 1884), 8; New Hampshire Gazette, Nov. 18, 1774; Proceedings of Durham town meeting and order of provincial Committee of Correspondence, HLRO, 1775, no. 284.
33 Wentworth to Rockingham, Nov. 9, 1774; NEHGR, 23(1869): 275; Wentworth to Eleazar Wheelock, Nov. 18, 1774, in Chase, Dartmouth College, 1:325; Wentworth to Jeremy Belknap, Nov. 18, and to Thomas W. Waldron, Nov. 26, 1774, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891):65, 67.


35 Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldron, Nov. 26, 1774, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 68; Gipson, 12: Britain Sails Into the Storm, 259-60, 342. Dartmouth is quoted on 250.


40 Wilderson, "The Raids on Fort William and Mary," 188-90.

41 Ibid., 191-92; Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7.
John Cochran to Wentworth and Wentworth to General Gage, Dec. 14, 1774, in Belknap, History, 2:328-31; NHSP, 7:421; Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7. Wentworth was apparently hedging when he denied knowledge of any ships or troops headed for the Piscataqua to secure the armaments at Fort William and Mary. On December 9 he wrote to Thomas Waldron: "I am in expectation of a man-of-war in this port next Sunday." (MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4/1891: 69.) It does not appear, however, that the intention of any such ship was to confiscate the arms at the fort. In a letter to Wentworth on December 19, General Gage referred to the "Falsehood of the Reports about seizing either Arms or Ammunition in the Provincial Forts." (PRO, C.O.5/939.)

Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7; Wilderson, "The Raids on Fort William and Mary," 192-94.

Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Dec. 20, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/939 (a portion of this letter is printed in NEHGR, 23/1867: 276-77). Attesting to the unruly nature of the crowd in Portsmouth on December 16 was the treatment received by William Pottle of Stratham. Denounced as a "Tory" for his alleged opposition to aid for Boston and to the tea boycott, Pottle was pulled from his horse, roughed up by the mob and chased out of town. See Charles W. Brewster, Rambles About Portsmouth (Somersworth, N.H., 1971, 1:198-99).

Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldron, Dec. 30, 1774, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 70; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Dec. 20, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/939; Josiah Bartlett to militia officers of Sandown, Dec. 15, 1774, Josiah Bartlett Papers, box 1, fol. 1; Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7; NHSP, 7:423. Two recent students of the raids on Fort William and Mary have come to the "inescapable conclusion" that a large number of the men involved were from the "upper-middle and upper classes." (Theodore Crackell and Martin Andresen, "Fort William and Mary: A Case Study in Crowd Behavior," Historical New Hampshire, 29/Winter, 1974: 220.) Wentworth placed much of the blame on Sullivan and Folsom, the delegates to the Continental Congress who, he concluded, took "a more active part in the violence... with a view to Secure and promote a popular interest in this convention." (Wentworth to Dartmouth, Dec. 28, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/939. See also Wentworth to Dartmouth, Dec. 20, and to General Gage, Dec. 29, 1774, Ibid.) Names of the participants in the raids can be found in Crackel and Andresen, "Fort William and Mary," and Wilderson, "The Raids on Fort William and Mary."
Belknap, History, 1:353-54; Wentworth to Dartmouth, Dec. 20, to General Gage, Dec. 29, 1774, and Admiral Graves to Wentworth, Jan. 2, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; Wentworth's narrative, WWM, R63-7; Wentworth to George Erving, Jan. 5, 1775, NEHGR, 23(1869): 277; Wentworth to Graves, Dec. 30, 1774, and Graves to the Admiralty, Jan. 8, 1775, HLRO, 1775, no. 296.


Ibid., 71; Wentworth to General Gage, Dec. 29, 1774, PRO, C.O.5/939.


NHSP, 7:442-44.

Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldron, Jan. 27, 1775, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 73; John Wentworth's Proclamation, Feb. 22, Gage to Wentworth, Jan. 24, Wentworth to Dartmouth, Mar. 10, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; NHSP, 7:370-71. It is questionable whether the members elected from Orford and Lyme turned out to be supportive of the Governor. When objections were raised by the Assembly against their sitting, they did not attempt to force the issue but instead declined to take their seats. (Richard F. Upton, Revolutionary New Hampshire /New York, 1971 (1936), 25.) Some forty-five unrepresented towns were larger than these three Grafton County Communities. (Daniell, Experiment in Republicanism, 87n.)


Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldron, Jan. 27, Feb. 8, 1775, MHS, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 73-74, 81. If Wentworth still loved the people of New Hampshire, a letter to him in mid-March from "The Spectator" was indicative that respect for him had been given up only reluctantly. Heaping high praise on the Governor, Spectator then listed his alleged offenses of recent months and wondered why it was necessary for the executive to "echo the voice of a despotick Minister." Touching on the futility and tragedy of the situation that had produced this unnatural estrangement, Spectator lamented, "I . . . pity the person appointed to preside, and the unhappy people who are called to obey." The Spectator to Governor Wentworth, Peter Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., 2:159-60.

Gipson, 12: Britain Sails Into the Storm, 301-06; Marchioness of Rockingham to Edmund Burke, Mar. 29, 1775, Edmund Burke, The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, ed. by Thomas W. Copeland (Cambridge, 1958-1970), 3:146. Distrusting her own political knowledge, Lady Rockingham decided to delete this passage from her letter to Frances Wentworth. The quote from Burke is found in Gipson, 303.


Wentworth to Dartmouth, May 17, Deposition of Dr. Josiah Pomeroy, May 16, 1775, PRO, C.0.5/939; George Meserve and Robert Trail to Commissioners of Customs, Boston, May 18, 1775, PRO, TL/513.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, May 17, 1775, PRO, C.0.5/939; NHSP, 7:473, 481, 485, 487.

Schlesinger, Colonial Merchants, 556; NHSP, 7:480, 486.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, June 3, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; NHSP, 7:375-77, and 18:663-64. An attempt had been made in England to exclude from the Restraining Act shipments of needed food, but it was voted down by a margin of nearly four to one. See Gipson, 12: Britain Sails Into the Storm, 294-300.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, June 3, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; NHSP, 7:376-77; David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock, Aug. 15, 1775, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 775465.1.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, June 3, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939.

NHSP, 7:377-81.

Gipson, 12: Britain Sails Into the Storm, 296-97; NHSP, 7:380. Hartly is quoted in Gipson, 296.


Daniell, "Lady Wentworth's Last Days," 22; Wentworth to Dartmouth, June 14, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; Brewster, Rambles About Portsmouth, 1:98.

Admiral Graves to Wentworth, June 23, Captain Barkley to Wentworth, June 27, Wentworth to Graves, June 29, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; NEHGR, 23(1869): 278; NHSP, 7:381-82.


NHSP, 7:383-86; Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 17, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939.

Wentworth to Dartmouth, July 17, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; Wentworth to Barkley, July 17, and to Tristram Dalton, July 31, 1775, Letter Book no. 3, 125-26, 128-29; Wentworth to Newcastle Selectmen, Aug. 17, 1775, Wentworth Papers, Newcastle Town Archives; NEHGR, 23(1869): 278; NHSP, 7:381; David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock, Aug. 15, 1775, Wheelock Papers, DCA, 775465.1.
73. Wentworth to Dartmouth, Aug. 8, 18, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939.

74. Wentworth to Dartmouth, Aug. 18, Portsmouth Town Meeting, Aug. 10, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939.


76. Wentworth to Dartmouth, Aug. 18, 29, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock, Aug. 15, 1775, Wheelock Papers, DOA, 775465.1; Wentworth to Newcastle Selectmen and Newcastle Selectmen to Wentworth, Aug. 17, 1775, Wentworth Papers, Newcastle Town Archives; NHSP, 7:390.

77. Wentworth to Dartmouth, Aug. 29, Sept. 29, 1775, PRO, C.O.5/939; Wentworth to Theodore Atkinson, Sept. 21, 1775, Wentworth Papers, NHHS, box 1, fol. 4; NHSP, 7:393-94.
EPILOGUE

From the perspective of 200 years and all that is known about the American Revolution, a logical query that many will make about John Wentworth is, why did he choose loyalty to England rather than to his native land and fellow countrymen? The question, however, is inappropriate. For John Wentworth it was not a matter of making a choice. When he left New Hampshire in August, 1775, he was not choosing England over America. In his mind the two could not be separated. The current trouble, severe as it was, was only temporary. Unfortunately, it finally appeared that force would have to be used to quell the incipient rebellion. There was no question but that British force would prevail. Once it had, however, and order and authority had been restored, both sides, mutually chastened by the experience, could set to the task of creating a more equitable system of Empire, one of mutual trust and advantage. This was what Wentworth had had in mind when he left England in 1766.

John Wentworth knew there were reasonable, prudent people on both sides. The inhabitants of America would be turning to moderate leaders to replace the reckless radicals who had led them into a disastrous civil war. In this Wentworth was ready to play a part. On the other side the British could not fail to see that much of the trouble had been created by an obstinate, uncompromising attitude at Whitehall. Wentworth knew by his own experience that that did not have to be the case. In 1765-66 he had observed and worked with the Rockingham
Ministry which, through reason and foresight, had obtained repeal of the Stamp Act, a decision in the best interests of the entire British Empire. Had the Rockinghamites remained in power they would never have attempted to enforce the Declaratory Act, which they had been obliged to accept along with the repeal. That alone, Wentworth believed, would have prevented all the trouble and grief that had ensued since that time.

But it was too late to think about that now. The crisis had arrived and had to be dealt with. Once it was settled, however, the Rockinghamites, or those with similar views, could be brought back to power. Work could then begin on building a strong, closely-knit, productive British Empire, one, Wentworth told the Marquis of Rockingham in December, 1775, "cemented by justice and reciprocation of interests with an evident attention to mutual rights."¹ John Wentworth could not then know that his vision of an integrated Empire was not to be, that England and America were destined to be separate countries. He could not know that he would never again return to New Hampshire.

On August 9, 1775, John Wentworth observed his thirty-eighth birthday at Fort William and Mary. When he sailed away from New Hampshire in September, more than half of his life still lay ahead of him. Early in 1776 he sent Frances and their baby son to England. He nevertheless was confident that the British would shortly reassert their authority over the colonies, and he remained in America for more than two years devoting
himself to that end and waiting for a chance to return to New Hampshire. The Governor spent most of this time in New York close to the British Army. A body of Loyalist troops was formed under his patronage and was known as Wentworth's Volunteers. By 1778 John realized that the revolution in America would not be easily ended and in February he sailed for England.²

Wentworth spent the next five years in Britain where he served as a spokesman for the American Loyalists. He sought information from every possible source but the news got no better. He learned that late in 1778 his name had been placed at the head of a list of seventy-six persons forbidden upon pain of death ever to return to New Hampshire. The defeat of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 insured his permanent exile. In 1783, the same year that Great Britain in the Treaty of Paris recognized the United States of America as an independent nation, John Wentworth secured the position of Surveyor General of His Majesty's Woods for the greatly reduced British Empire in North America. In September he arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia, to take up his new post.³

As a former governor, Wentworth might have treated his position as a sinecure and left the real work to others. But as he had always been, he was diligent, energetic, and enthusiastic in carrying out his responsibilities. He spent many months of each year himself ranging the timberlands of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, providing invaluable service to the Crown in a difficult and thankless task. Although he still encountered resentment of the mast laws, John made many friends in Nova Scotia. When Governor Parr died in 1791, Wentworth
had considerable support within the province as Parr's replacement. He was in England at the time. The Marquis of Rockingham had died in 1782, but John could still call on the patronage of Lady Rockingham and Edmund Burke. In January, 1792, he was appointed Governor of Nova Scotia.4

The years of Wentworth's administration have been described as the "Golden Age" of Nova Scotia, a period when "life at the provincial capital possessed an exhilaration and a zest hitherto unknown." John Wentworth did do much for the province. He took a personal interest in its development just as he had in his native New Hampshire. In 1795 he was made a baronet by the King and during these years he became a close friend of the monarch's son, Prince Edward, later Duke of Kent, who lived for a time near Halifax. Yet over the years Wentworth created enemies. One point of unrest developed out of the favoritism he showed in the appointment of large numbers of Loyalist refugees to various offices. After 1800 his growing fear of the democratic tendencies unleashed by the French Revolution brought him into continuous conflict with emerging liberal sentiment in the Nova Scotia legislature. By 1808 this clash had made government nearly unworkable and Sir John Wentworth was relieved of his office with no prior warning.5

John and Frances Wentworth lingered in Nova Scotia until 1810 when they sailed to England to live out their days with their son, Charles Mary. Unfortunately, one last tragedy awaited John Wentworth. As Governor of Nova Scotia he had given his personal bond for £1200 to clothe the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment, an act "he considered merely pro forma." The
bond, however, was sold and in 1812 John, who had been living on a meager pension, was informed that he must pay immediately or be arrested. Late in August, at the age of seventy-five and with his wife dying, he was forced to flee at night under an assumed name. From Liverpool he embarked for Halifax where he might sell some property to meet his debts. Sadly, Frances Wentworth died in February, 1813, before John could return to England. With no reason to go back, he remained in Nova Scotia. John Wentworth died in Halifax in 1820 at the age of eighty-three.

True to his character, John Wentworth never harbored ill feelings for the United States of America, which he wished "the most extensive, great and permanent blessings," or for New Hampshire. After his departure he maintained an interest in his native province and continued to correspond with old friends such as Eleazar Wheelock's son, John Wheelock, and Jeremy Belknap. His only regret was that he would never be able to visit them, a realization that reaffirmed his conviction that the break between the American colonies and Great Britain need never have occurred. "I do verily believe," Wentworth wrote Belknap fifteen years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, that "had the true, wise, and open measures been embraced on both sides, that their union would have been many years established and their prosperity wonderfully increased." He may have been right.
NOTES

EPILOGUE

1 Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham, Dec. 4, 1775
Wentworth-Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield Central Library, Rl-1634.

2 Wilbur H. Siebert, "Loyalist Troops of New England,"
Boulter, "The Loyalists of New Hampshire" (unpublished M.A.
record for these troops can be found in the Public Record Office,
A.0.1/325, no. 1288.

3 Mary Beth Norton, The British-Americans: The Loyalist
Exiles in England, 1774-1789 (Boston, 1972), 187; NHS
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8:810;
Wentworth to Daniel Rindge, Sept. 29, 1783, Masonian Papers,
New Hampshire Archives, 3:55.

4 Robert G. Albion, Forests and Sea Power: The Timber
Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862 (Cambridge, Mass., 1926),
350-52; WWM, FL28-86, RL157-1,3,4,5,6,9,10,12,13,18. The office
Wentworth held was actually Lieutenant-Governor under the
Governor of Canada who was located at Quebec. He did have full
responsibility for his province.

5 The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. 6:
Canada and Newfoundland (New York, 1930), 213-14. On this later
period of Wentworth's life see Sibley's Harvard Graduates, 13:
670-81; Sir Adams Archibald, "Life of Sir John Wentworth:
Governor of Nova Scotia, 1792-1808," Nova Scotia Historical
Society, Collections, 20(1921): 43-109; Lawrence Shaw Mayo,
John Wentworth: Governor of New Hampshire, 1767-1775 (Cambridge,
Mass., 1921), 162-95; Margaret Ellis, "Governor Wentworth's
 Patronage," in Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces, ed.


7 Wentworth to Jeremy Belknap, May 15, 1791, Massachusetts
Historical Society, Collections, 6th Ser., 4(1891): 497-500;
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