

"A Society of Patriotic Ladies"

As you read...

MORE RESPONSES FROM BRITAIN

James Iredell's brother Arthur, who was married to Hannah Johnston, one of the signers of the Edenton petition, lived in England. After reading about the "Edenton Tea Party" in the London papers, he wrote to his brother,

Is there a female congress at Edenton, too? I hope not, for we Englishmen are afraid of the male congress, but if the ladies, who have ever since the Amazonian era been esteemed the most formidable enemies: if they, I say, should attack us, the most fatal consequence is to be dreaded. So dextrous in the handling of a dart, each wound they give is mortal: whilst we, so unhappily formed by nature, the more we strive to conquer them, the more we are conquered. The Edenton ladies, conscious, I suppose, of this superiority on their side, by a former experience, are willing, I imagine, to crush us into atoms by their omnipotency: the only security on our side to prevent the impending ruin, that I can perceive, is the probability that there are but few places in America which possess so much female artillery as Edenton.



Figure 1. Move your mouse over the image to see comments.

petitionpresidingbaby and dog

This British cartoon satirizes the fifty-one "patriotic ladies" of Edenton, North Carolina, in their attempt to endorse the nonimportation association resolves of 1774. Drawn by Philip Dawes, it was titled "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina," appeared in a London newspaper on March 25, 1775.

Look closely at the image. What is happening? (Read the mouseover comments to find details and get some additional context.) What does the cartoonist think of the Edenton "Tea Party"? Of the Revolutionaries? Of women's "proper" role?

On the web

You're Invited! The Edenton Tea Party

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/civiced/resources/docs/edentonteparty8.pdf>

In this lesson from the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, students will learn about the Edenton Tea Party, one of the earliest organized women's political actions in United States history that occurred in 1774 in Edenton, North Carolina. Students will then exhibit their understanding of the event by creating an invitation that combines artistic and creative measure with learned facts of the protest.

More from LEARN NC

Visit us on the web at www.learnnc.org to learn more about topics related to this article, including American Revolution, Chowan County, Edenton, North Carolina, history, political cartoons, politics, satire, and women.

Image credits

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Figure 1 (page 2)

Philip Dawes, "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina." Mezzotint. London, March 25, 1775. This image is believed to be in the public domain. Users are advised to make their own copyright assessment.