

## The "Edenton Tea Party" <sup>[1]</sup>

By Kelly Agan, N.C. Government & Heritage Library, 2018

*Two months after [North Carolina's First Provincial Congress](#) <sup>[2]</sup> organized and adopted resolutions opposing the actions of Parliament, a group of North Carolina women made their own revolutionary political statement. It is one of the earliest examples in America of women organizing to influence laws, regulations, or customs. At the time, politics was considered a sphere for men only, and participation by women was considered improper.*

*On October 25, 1774, fifty-one women in Edenton resolved to stop buying English imports and pledged to support the actions and resolutions of North Carolina's Provincial Congress. Their resolves were an historic step for colonists, who relied on tea, cloth and other goods that came from British trade. A few weeks later, their statement was printed in the November 3 edition of *The Virginia Gazette*, the local paper published in Williamsburg, Virginia. The names of the fifty-one women were published below their statement. And it did not take long for news of the event to reach a wider audience in London: in January of 1775, the statement published in the *Gazette* appeared in a London paper, the *Morning Chronicle* and *London Advertiser*. And shortly after that, a London engraver created a cartoon satirizing the women for their patriotic action.*

*Historians credit one of the women, [Penelope Barker](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, as a significant coordinator of the women's effort. Her husband, [Thomas Barker](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, was an Edenton Lawyer and at one time a member of the Colonial Assembly.*

*In the late 19th century, a local Edenton historian re-invented the actions of the Edenton women as a "tea party". Since then it has remained known as the "Edenton Tea Party," although it very likely did not involve tea or a party. It was a bold demonstration of patriotism and a unique example of political organization by colonial women.*

*See the transcription of this statement by the women of Edenton, published in the November 3, 1774 edition of *The Virginia Gazette* below.*

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Edenton, North Carolina, Oct. 25, 1774.

As we cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears nearly to affect the peace and happiness of our country, and as it has been thought necessary, for the public good, to enter into [several particular resolves](#) by a meeting of Members deputed from the whole Province, it is [a duty which we owe, not only to our near and dear connections who have concurred in them, but to ourselves who are essentially interested in their welfare](#), to do every thing as far as lies in our power to testify our sincere adherence to the same; and we do therefore accordingly subscribe this paper, as a witness of our fixed intention and solemn determination to do so.

Abigail Charlton

Mary Blount

F. Johnstone

Elizabeth Creacy

Margaret Cathcart

Elizabeth Patterson

Anne Johnstone

Jane Wellwood  
Margaret Pearson  
Mary Woolard  
Penelope Dawson  
Sarah Beasley  
Jean Blair  
Susannah Vail  
Grace Clayton  
Elizabeth Vail  
Frances Hall  
Elizabeth Vail  
Mary Jones  
Mary Creacy  
Anne Hall  
Mary Creacy  
Rebecca Bondfield  
Ruth Benbury  
Sarah Littlejohn  
Sarah Howcott  
[Penelope Barker](#)  
Sarah Hoskins  
Elizabeth P. Ormond  
Mary Littlede  
M. Payne  
Sarah Valentine  
Elizabeth Johnston  
Elizabeth Cricket  
Mary Bonner  
Elizabeth Green  
Lydia Bonner  
Mary Ramsay  
Sarah Howe  
Anne Horniblow  
Lydia Bennet

Mary Hunter

Marion Wells

Tresia Cunningham

Anne Anderson

Elizabeth Roberts

Sarah Mathews

Elizabeth Roberts

Anne Haughton

Elizabeth Roberts

Elizabeth Beasley

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[Penelope Barker](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

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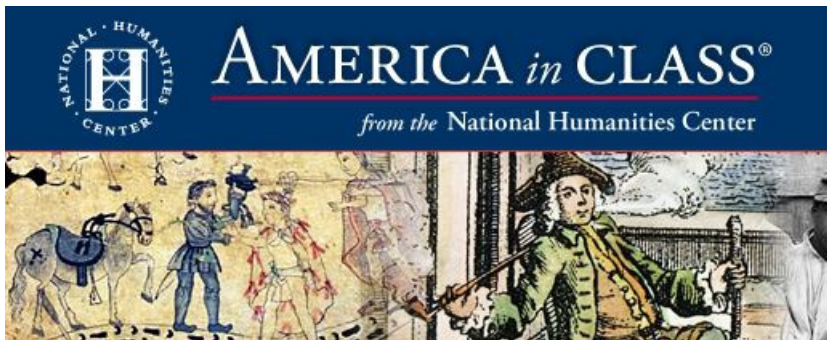
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[25]

View the image of the original publication in The Virginia Gazette, November 3, 1774<sup>[25]</sup>

3 January 2018

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