

NEWS FROM BOSTON

To William Small

May 7, 1775

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DEAR SIR, -- I had the pleasure by a gentleman who saw you at Birmingham to hear of your welfare. By Capt. Aselby of the True-patriot belonging to Messrs. Farrell & Jones of Bristol I send you 3 doz. bottles of Madeira, being the half of a present which I had laid by for you. The capt was afraid to take more on board lest it should draw upon him the officers of the customs. The remaining three doz. therefore I propose to send by Cap;att Drew belonging to the same mercantile house, who is just arrived here. That which goes by Aselby will be delivered by him to your order, the residue by Drew, or by Farrell & Jones, I know not which as yet. I hope you will find it fine as it came to me genuine from the island & has been kept in my own cellar eight years. Within this week we have received the unhappy news of an action of considerable magnitude, between the King's troops and our brethren of Boston, in which it is said five hundred of the former, with the Earl of Percy, are slain. That such an action has occurred, is undoubted, though perhaps the circumstances may not have reached us with truth. This accident has cut off our last hope of reconciliation, and a phrensy of revenge seems to have seized all ranks of people. It is a lamentable circumstance, that the only mediatory power, acknowledged by both parties, instead of leading to a reconciliation of his divided people, should pursue the incendiary purpose of still blowing up the flames, as we find him constantly doing, in every speech and public declaration. This may, perhaps, be intended to intimidate into acquiescence, but the effect has been most unfortunately otherwise. A little knowledge of human nature, and attention to its ordinary workings, might have foreseen that the spirits of the people here were in a state, in which they were more likely to be provoked, than frightened, by haughty deportment. And to fill up the measure of irritation, a proscription of individuals has been substituted in the room of just trial. Can it be believed, that a grateful people will suffer those to be consigned to execution, whose sole crime has been the developing and asserting their rights? Had the Parliament possessed the power of reflection, they would have avoided a measure as impotent, as it was inflammatory. When I saw Lord Chatham's bill, I entertained high hope that a reconciliation could have been brought about. The difference between his terms, and those offered by our Congress, might have been accommodated, if entered on, by both parties, with a disposition to accommodate. But the dignity of Parliament, it seems, can brook no opposition to its power. Strange, that a set of men, who have made sale of their virtue to the Minister, should yet talk of retaining dignity! But I am getting into politics, though I sat down only to ask your acceptance of the wine, and express my constant wishes for your happiness. This however seems to be ensured by your philosophy & peaceful vocation. I shall still hope that amidst public dissention private friendship may be preserved inviolate and among the warmest you can ever possess is that of your humble servt.

Source: [Electronic Text Center Virginia University Library](#).