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Creation Date: October 9, 1775
Description: Letter from Admiral Samuel Graves to Philip Stephens regarding the British ships sent to bombard harbors and towns along the Massachusetts coast.

From Admiral Samuel Graves to Philip Stephens Secretary to the Admiralty
Preston Boston 9th October 1775

Finding that forbearance to punish the people of the four New England Governments for their many rebellions and piratical acts, only encouraged them to go greater lengths, I determined to observe a different conduct and if possible, destroy some of their towns and shipping to this end I sent General Gage a letter dated September 1st a copy of which and of his answer is enclosed. Many difficulties occurred in the procuring and equipping the Symmetry Transport and Spitfire Sloop with proper stores for the expedition and the weak state of the Garrison hardly allowing any draughts to be made. General Gage could spare but one hundred men commanded by Captain Lieutenant Forster of Marines with a Subaltern Officer. The command of the whole consisting of the vessels as margin I have given to Lieutenant Mowat of the Canceaux armed ship, solely from his being well acquainted with the pilotage of the coast where his operations are to be carried on I have [in left margin]

Canceaux Armed Ship
Halifax Armed Schooner
Symmetry Transport
Spitfire Armed Sloop

ordered him to take the advantage of wind and weather and enter any of the Harbours to the Eastward of Boston, and if possible first to go to Cape Ann where the Rebels thought proper to fire upon the Falcon and where they took several of her Officers and crew and sent them prisoners in the country. Lieut. Mowats Orders are to burn and lay waste the Towns and destroy the Shipping in Harbours when they cannot with ease be taken away. This flying squadron lay ready to depart when the Raven arrived. Their Lordships Orders by her coinciding exactly with what was then doing gave me great pleasure. The few little advantages the Rebels have had over us have given them confidence and there is no doubt of His Majesty's Ships being fired upon and opposed in every place where the Rebels can do it with impunity, or with a shadow of success. I have ordered Mr. Mowat to protect the persons and property of His Majesty's loyal subjects, wherever they can be distinguished, and he sailed yesterday the 8th instant from Nantasket.

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