

Leedstown and Fincastle

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The Winter 2010 *Newsletter of the Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Society* announced a February 27th, 2010 reenactment of the 243rd anniversary of the Leedstown Resolutions¹ saying: "History will come to life along the streets of Tappahannock as NNVHS and the Essex County Museum and Historical Society combine to present dramatic reenactments of the famous 1766 Tappahannock Demonstrations to enforce the Leedstown Resolutions, against the wealthy and insolent Archibald Ritchie² and the Scotsman Stamp Collector, Archibald McCall, who was tarred and feathered for his refusal to comply." Because I am interested in, and have written about, the pre-revolutionary-period Virginia County Resolutions I decided to attend.

This article tells about the 1766 Leedstown Resolutions (adopted in Westmoreland County) and their February 2010 reenactment in Tappahannock. It also tells about the role of Richard Henry Lee during the buildup to revolution in Virginia and explores the connections between Westmoreland County and Fincastle County, which existed briefly from 1772-1776.



Reenacting an event of 244 years earlier, Richard Henry Lee (portrayed by Ted Borek) acting on behalf of the Westmoreland Association confronts Archibald Ritchie (portrayed by Bob Bailey) at Ritchie's front door in Tappahannock. Samuel Washington (portrayed by John Harris) stands with a cane. Bailey as Ritchie read a declaration forswearing the use of tax stamps, just as he had done under duress in 1766 "with his Hat off and with an audible Voice." The house dates from 1706 and today is the office of the law firm of Dillard and Katona.³



Richard Henry Lee confronts Archibald McCall (portrayed by Dan McMahon) and his wife (portrayed by Judith Harris) on the steps of the extensively restored Brockenbrough-McCall House⁴ that is today a part of present day St. Margaret's School. The vegetable peddler in the foreground is portrayed by Kimberly Walters, an expert in the cooking of the period.⁵ Despite the claim above, I can find no confirming evidence that Archibald McCall was ever tarred and feathered.⁶

1. Shepherd, Kathryn, ed. *Newsletter of the Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Society*, Volume 4, No. 1, Winter 2010, p. 1 At <http://nnvhs.web.officelive.com/Documents/NNVHS%20Newsletter%20Winter%202010.pdf>.

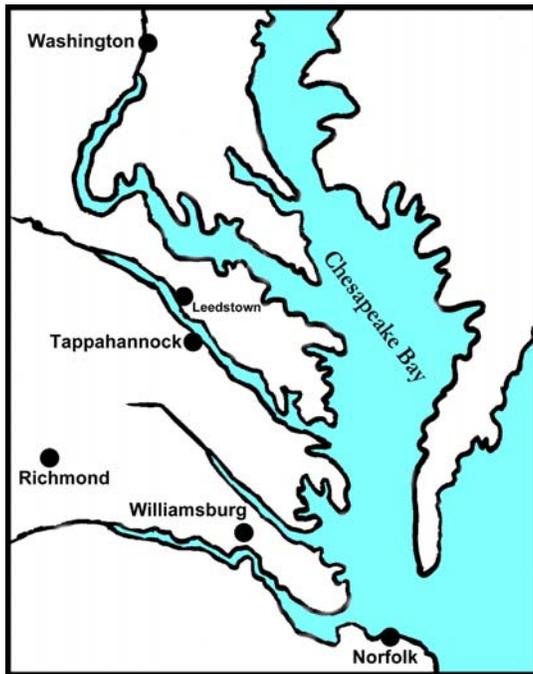
2. See "Tappahannock and the Stamp Act" at <http://www.thehouseandhomemagazine.com/Articles/Issue12/Tappahannock/tabid/287/Default.aspx>.

3. I took this and all the other pictures in this article.

4. See <http://www.tappahannock.us/brocken.htm>

5. See <http://www.generalwashington.net/p/receipts.html>.

6. Slaughter, James B. *Settlers, Southerners, Americans: the History of Essex County, Virginia, 1608-1984*. Tappahannock: Essex County Board of Supervisors, 1985. At <http://books.google.com/books?id=MCUTAAAAYAAJ>. Finding aid for the McCall family Papers 1764-1891. At <http://www.hsp.org/files/findingaid1786mccallfamily.pdf>. The misconception seems to derive from an error in Lyon Gardiner Tyler's *History of Virginia*, Volume II, *The Federal Period 1763-1861* (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1924), p. 90. On line at



Leedstown is on the south side of the Northern Neck — the peninsula of land on the western side of the Chesapeake Bay lying between the Potomac River to the north and the Rappahannock River to the south. Leedstown is in Westmoreland County. The town of Tappahannock is in Essex County on the south bank of the Rappahannock River. The bridge at Tappahannock is pictured below — looking from Tappahannock towards the northeast and Richmond County.



The Factors that Led to the American Revolution in the Colony of Virginia

In early 1763 the Treaty of Paris confirmed the British expulsion of the French from North America and ratified the outcome of the French and Indian (or Seven Years) War. Later that same year, King George III and his government issued the Proclamation that reserved western Virginia lands to the American Indian tribes. Over the next eleven years Britain and the colonies played out a struggle that involved a complex mix of economic, political, expansionist, class, and many other factors. At length, in the fall of 1774, the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. By that time the coming American Revolution was perhaps unavoidable. Historians have yet to reach any very clear consensus about how the interactions of those many factors, operating across thirteen colonies, finally led in 1776 to the Declaration of American Independence. However, those same historians have generated an enormous body of literature on the subject. Anyone interested in pursuing an understanding of the complexities could do worse than by studying the bibliographies available on line in an older work by Rothbard⁷ and in a very recent "official" Virginia recounting of the buildup to Revolution.⁸ In attempting to understand the factors that led up to the eventual Virginia break with Britain, I have personally found useful the works by Egnal,⁹ by Holton,¹⁰ by Ward,¹¹ and by Dowdey¹² — who gives a good account of the Leedstown/Tappahannock story of 1766. One example of a minority view of the cause of the Revolution in Virginia is a book that argues that the preservation of slavery was its chief motivation.¹³

The events that occurred in Leedstown and Tappahannock in 1766 were a minor but significant part of the slow-evolving process that played out over that eleven year period. My purpose here is to describe and place in context the events that occurred in those places in that year. Two key elements in the Leedstown/Tappahannock story of 1766 were the role of Richard Henry Lee and the reactions of British Americans to the Stamp Act. Richard Henry Lee (about whom much more later) lived at Chantilly-on-the-Potomac in Westmoreland County, a dozen miles north of Leedstown. R. H. Lee is a key figure in the American revolutionary movement. The Stamp Act was a British parliamentary enactment intended to raise revenue in the American colonies and a measure that proved a trigger for the American cause of "no taxation without representation."

http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2006_06/uvaBook/tei/b004914677.xml.

7. Rothbard, Murray N. "Modern Historians Confront the American Revolution." At <http://mises.org/daily/2541> and in print in *Literature of Liberty*, January-March 1978, pp. 16-41.

8. Campbell, W. E., and the staff of the Virginia State Department of Education, D. Alan Williams, Consultant. "The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Road to Independence: Virginia 1763-1783*. Project Gutenberg, 2009, bibliography on pp. 68-70. At <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/30058/30058-h/30058-h.htm>.

9. Egnal Marc. *A Mighty Empire: The Origins of the American Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

10. Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia), 1999.

11. Ward, Harry M. *The War for Independence and the Transformation of American Society*. London: UCL Press, 1999.

12. Dowdey, Clifford. *The Golden Age — a Climate for Greatness, Virginia 1732-1775*. Boston: Little Brown, 1970. See pp. 286-288.

13. Blumrosen, Alfred W. and Ruth G. Blumrosen. *Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies & Sparked the American Revolution*. Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2005.

The Scheme of Association

The "Scheme of Association" is one name given to the document adopted at Leedstown on 27 February 1776 expressing the political purposes of the men who gathered in February 1766 in Leedstown in Westmoreland County. The document consisted of six articles that: 1. Declared obedience to George III; 2. Declared that taxation of Virginians by the British government without representation was unlawful; 3. Determined to oppose the Stamp Act with their every faculty; 4. Created their "Association"; 5. Sought persons to sign on to join their Association; and, 6. Resolved to defend all the members of the Association and protect their property. The events that took place in Leedstown on 27 February of 1766 and Tappahannock on 28 February 1766 were immediately precipitated (the root causes went much deeper) by the action of the merchant Archibald Ritchie who declared publicly in Richmond County that he was prepared to purchase tax stamps in compliance with the Stamp Act to "clear out" his vessels from Tappahannock port and that he knew where he could obtain the necessary stamps. The anonymous correspondent who reported the events to William Rind, the editor of the then brand-new Rind's *Virginia Gazette* (which is discussed below) remarked that persons were "enraged" at Ritchie's "matchless impudence," and were alarmed by the potentially dangerous consequences of Ritchie's complying with the Act for the "Liberty of our Country." Thus, these persons chose a committee to regulate their "Plan of Operations," and drew up at Leedstown a "Scheme of Association." The list of articles is referred to by a variety of names: "Leedstown Resolutions," "Westmoreland Resolutions of 1766" and most reliably and definitively as "The Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 27 February 1766."¹⁴ One hundred and fourteen¹⁵ men signed the articles. At the top of the list of signers was Richard Henry Lee of Chantilly-on-the-Potomac, who was their author.

An excerpt from the *Virginia Gazette* (William Rind's version) of Friday 16 May 1766. This issue published the articles drawn up on 27 February by the Westmoreland County "Sons of Liberty." Click on the link below to see the full, original article.¹⁶

"OUR publishing an Account of the following Proceedings of the Sons of Liberty in this Colony, will oblige many, and is an early instance of our determination to [unreadable, uphold?] the FREEDOM of your PRESS." After citing the articles against the Stamp Act in full, the *Gazette* reported: "THE Sons of Liberty to the amount of Four Hundred, drew up in Two Lines, in the main Street of the Town, whilst the Gentlemen appointed by the Committee for that Purpose, went to the House of the said *Ritchie*, and agreeable to their instructions, read to him the Declarations prepared for him, and required him to go with them to the main Body, in order to read sign and swear to the same."



Leedstown today is a tiny, quiet, rural community surrounded by vegetable fields and notable only for hosting the GTL Corporation¹⁷ motor vehicle safety testing facility on Route 637, near the Leedstown lighthouse (at left).

When I visited on 28 February 2010 the Leedstown historical marker was missing from its traditional home on Route 637. A transcript of what the missing marker states is at right.¹⁸

JT-15

LEEDSTOWN

HERE AT THE THEN THRIVING PORT OF LEEDSTOWN ON FEBRUARY 27, 1766, TEN YEARS BEFORE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THE LEEDSTOWN RESOLUTIONS (OR WESTMORELAND ASSOCIATION) WERE DRAWN. THIS ASSOCIATION, A PROTEST AGAINST THE STAMP ACT AND A PLEDGE OF MUTUAL AID IN EVENT OF ITS EXECUTION, WAS SIGNED BY 115 MEN FROM WESTMORELAND AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES.

The events in Leedstown in 1765 played a role in the establishment of press freedom in America. The 16 May 1766 issue of Rind's *Virginia Gazette* was the premier issue. The existing *Virginia Gazette* of William Purdie, under the influence of Lieutenant Governor Francis Fauquier, had declined to publish such stories as Patrick Henry's resolutions against the Stamp Act of May 1765, the action of the Westmoreland County Court in September of 1765 declining to enforce the Stamp Act, and the events at Leedstown and Tappahannock. Thus it was that Richard Henry Lee and others persuaded William Rind to come to Williamsburg from Maryland to establish a paper that was "open to all parties, but influenced by none" and that would publish an account of the actions at Leedstown and Tappahannock. Rind's arrival in Williamsburg was an early blow for freedom of the press in colonial Virginia. During

14. Volume 1, pp. 22-26 in William J. Van Schreeven, Robert L. Scribner, and Brent Tarter, compilers and editors, *Revolutionary Virginia, the road to independence*, seven vols. Charlottesville: Published for the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, University Press of Virginia, 1973-1985.

15. This is Richard Barksdale Harwell's count. Different sources offer slightly varying counts. I have not myself counted.

16. Anonymous. "To Mr. William Rind from Leed's-Town, March 1, 1766." *Virginia Gazette* (Rind.), 16 May 1766, pp. 1-2, At <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/VirginiaGazette/VGIssueThumbs.cfm?IssueIDNo=66.R.02>.

17. See <http://www.general-testing.com/facilities.htm>.

18. Arnold, David Scott, compiler. *A Guidebook to Virginia's Historical Markers*, Third Edition. Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2007, p. 238.

late 1765 and early 1766 R. H. Lee's opposition to the Stamp Act had been aggressive and effective, but in humbling Ritchie he "came too close to conspiracy and violence to suit the taste of many people."¹⁹

The Place of the Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in the Timeline of Revolution

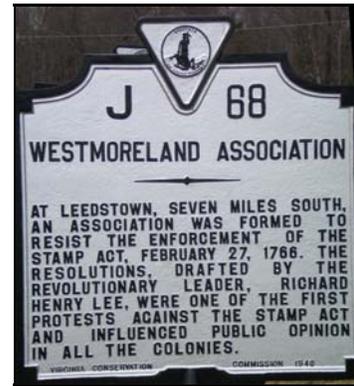
As John Adams famously wrote in an 1815 letter to Thomas Jefferson, "The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington."²⁰

In choosing 1760 as his starting date, John Adams referred no doubt to the fall of Montreal and the permanent neutralization that year by the British of French power in North America that ended the French and Indian War. Thoughts of revolution began only to slowly germinate in American minds after the Treaty of Paris was signed on 10 February 1763 and more particularly after the Proclamation by George III of 7 October 1763 that created a barrier line against western expansion along the eastern continental divide running down the crest of the Appalachian mountains. The proclamation line reserved lands to the west for the Indians and cut off the Virginian oligarchs from those very lands in which they had invested great hope as a potential source of revenue replacement for their declining tobacco and agricultural fortunes. With regard to Adams' latter date of 1775, it was not until 19 April 1775 that gun shots in Massachusetts heralded the Revolution in fact.



At left, recent high winds have bent the road sign marking the intersection of the Leedstown Road and Resolutions Road, a few hundred yards from the Leedstown lighthouse.

At right, the Westmoreland Association historical marker on Route 3 in Oak Grove (seven miles north of Leedstown) was in place on 28 February 2010.



After the 1763 treaty and western land proclamation, Parliamentary Acts were passed aimed at raising revenues in America to offset the heavy British debt from the French and Indian War. A Revenue Act, known popularly as the Sugar Act,²¹ passed Parliament on 5 April 1764 and laid taxes on the colonial importation of molasses, sugar, wines, coffee, etc. The Currency Act,²² which passed Parliament on 1 September 1764, regulated colonial money, prohibited the issue of any new bills, and abolished colonial bills already circulating. The Currency Act created great difficulties for the conduct of business by colonial merchants and demonstrated that the British government favored British merchants above colonial ones. On 22 March 1765 Parliament passed the Stamp Act²³ which required all colonists to pay a tax (in the form of a purchased stamp) on every piece of printed paper they used. Revenue so raised was supposed to offset ongoing British expenses incurred in defending the Appalachian frontier. These Acts and others produced discontent in the American colonies and political leaders and factions in the different colonies began to communicate with one another and exchange ideas about how to moderate the effects of British policies. In particular, communications between the colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts became significant. R. H. Lee was an early proponent of such contacts and wrote: "But well to understand each other, and timely to be informed of what passes, both here and in Great Britain, it would seem that not only select committees should be appointed by all the colonies, but that a private correspondence should be conducted between the lovers of liberty in every province."²⁴

A major signal of the growing colonial discontent with British policies, and a significant step along the creeping path to Revolution, came when on 29 May 1765 the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted several of Patrick Henry's proposed resolutions against the Stamp Act and declared that Americans possessed the same rights as Englishmen.²⁵ This action placed Patrick Henry at

19. Matthews, John Carter. *Richard Henry Lee*. Williamsburg: Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, 1978, pp. 10-11.

20. Adams, John. Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Ma., 24 August 1815. Pp. 491-493 in Augustine Washington, ed. *Volume 6 of The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859. At <http://books.google.com/books?id=wCK3cmIfRmYC>.

21. British Parliament. "The Sugar Act of 1764." An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America" On line at http://ahp.gatech.edu/sugar_act_bp_1764.html.

22. Lewis, J. D. "The Currency Act of 1764." At http://www.carolana.com/NC/Royal_Colony/The_Currency_Act_1764.html.

23. McIlwaine, H. R., ed. *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765*. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1908. The Stamp Act is at http://books.google.com/books?id=ffstAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=snippet&q=last%20of%20parliament&f=false.

24. Lee, Richard Henry. Letter to John Dickinson in Philadelphia from Chantilly, July 25, 1768. Pp. 65-66 in *The Life of Richard Henry Lee, and His Correspondence* Volume 1. Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1825. At <http://books.google.com/books?id=bkkWIBqWCCYC>.

25. Patrick Henry's proposed resolutions against the stamp act declaring that Americans possessed the same rights as Englishmen are at:

the vanguard of the incipient revolutionary movement in Virginia, though Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland County was not far behind.

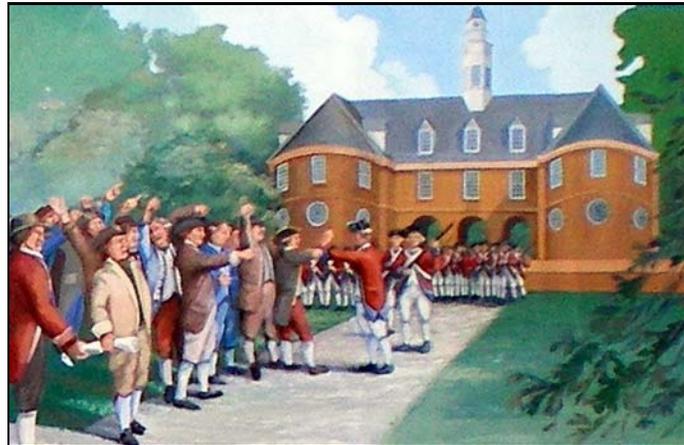
Between 1973 and 1985 the Library of Virginia produced a seven-volume compilation of key documents of the American Revolution in Virginia titled *Revolutionary Virginia*. By my count, volumes 1 and 2 together reproduce 279 source documents. So the total number of all documents listed in all seven volumes is likely about a thousand. First in that long list comes the 1763 address of the House of Burgesses defending the use of paper money. Second comes the Address of the General Assembly of December 1764 in opposition to the Stamp Act. Third comes Patrick Henry's anti-Stamp Act resolutions of May 1765. Fourth comes the aforementioned protest of the Westmoreland Court against the Stamp Act in September 1765. Fifth comes the nullification of the Stamp Act by the magistrates of Northampton County on 11 February 1766. Sixth come the Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 27 February 1766. At sixth place among about a thousand documents the Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association, rank very early in the evolution of revolutionary thinking in Virginia, and indeed in the colonies as a whole. Westmoreland County, Leedstown, and Tappahannock are significant shrines of American Independence.

Richard Henry Lee and the Making of a Radical

By any measure, Richard Henry Lee must be accounted among the most significant Americans of the revolutionary period and a crucial political leader. He was the driving force for the 1766 events in Leedstown and Tappahannock. R. H. Lee lived from 1732-1794 and grew up at Stratford Hall, the palatial Lee family home, plantation, and tobacco warehousing and shipping and ship-repair center on the cliffs of the Potomac at the northern edge of Westmoreland County. As was typical for the sons of the Virginia oligarchy at that time, he was educated in England where he spent five years (1748-1753). He was a planter and a merchant, he married twice and had four children by his first wife and five by his second. It is an interesting question as to how this man who had been born to wealth, power, and a secure place in the Virginia aristocracy, became one of the most radical of the revolutionary generation of Americans.



Portrait of Richard Henry Lee painted by Madison Cawein on display at the Westmoreland County Museum and Visitor Center in Montross.



Protests in Williamsburg in 1774 against British policies. This image is a detail from one of the murals painted on the flood wall at Point Pleasant, West Virginia.²⁶ This series of giant pictures tells the story of Dunmore's war and the role of the Fincastle men in it. I took this picture in October 2009.²⁷

In May 1764 Lee was among the very first Americans to write in opposition to the Stamp Act and Lee once remarked that while Patrick Henry had publicly received the honors for first opposition to the Stamp Act, he himself had opposed it even earlier (Chitwood, footnote 29, p. 35). In May of 1774, Lee, along with Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, wrote the resolution adopted by the House of Burgesses to make 1 June 1774 a "Day of Fasting and Prayer" in support of the Bostonians and in a display of Virginia-Massachusetts solidarity.²⁸ The British had declared that on that day the port of Boston would be permanently closed. In response to this resolution, Governor Dunmore dismissed the House of Burgesses. Later, not only did Lee sign the Declaration of Independence, he was the delegate to the second Continental Congress who made the motion to adopt the Declaration. Still later he served as US senator from Virginia, and in 1792 as the President *pro tempore* during the second US Congress. I was surprised, therefore, to find that it was not until 1967 that the first scholarly biography²⁹ of him was published. A short biography of him was

http://books.google.com/books?id=ffstAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=resolutions%20against&f=false.

26. Dafford, Robert. Point Pleasant Murals. Some can be viewed at http://www.robertdaffordmurals.com/Work_In_Progress.htm.

27. Brent Tarter (personal communication) notes that the image of the Virginia Capitol shown above is of the building that burned in the 1740s, not of the building that actually stood in the 1770s.

28. See <http://www.history.org/Almanack/people/bios/biolee.cfm>.

29. Chitwood, Oliver Perry. *Richard Henry Lee: Statesman of the Revolution*. Morgantown: West Virginia Library Foundation, 1967. See

published in 1978 in connection with the Bicentennial³⁰ and a recent biography makes a strong case that Lee continues to be underrated by history and historians in general.³¹

A sketch of R. H. Lee's character and motivations can be garnered from three academic theses, all of which have been conveniently published on line. Mary Elizabeth Virginia [sic]³² has argued that R. H. Lee has never been fully understood by historians and that while being rooted in Virginia's eighteenth century planter culture he was foremost a professional politician and as such was self serving and opportunistic. However, she also points out that "his career requires no apology" for "he worked tirelessly ... and his professional achievements were numerous and noteworthy." Holly Eileen Munchhoff Kendig³³ has argued that R. H. Lee "[C]ame to favor a mixed government in which the advantages of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy were blended." She asserts that in his career "The Boston Port Bill was the turning point" after which he aligned increasingly with the radicals. She noted also that the Boston Port Bill also inspired the movement for a general congress, which was actively promoted by Lee and by others. Anita Marie Grimm Taylor³⁴ has argued that R. H. Lee was "ambitious and confident," was not "self-effacing," nor "especially frugal," and "certainly not humble." She concluded that Lee's personal characteristics revealed by his rhetoric "indicate that [while he was not a Puritanical man] he was in one sense a Virginia puritan [who] viewed the world in moral terms." Taylor opined that R. H. Lee's violent anger against Archibald Ritchie grew from Lee's conviction that by clearing a loaded ship Ritchie was "trying to bring 'ruin' on the 'good' people of Virginia."

For the interested reader, much of the primary literature relating to Richard Henry Lee is available on line. This literature includes two volumes of his letters compiled by his namesake grandson in 1825,³⁵ letters written to R. H. Lee published in a series of magazine articles in 1858,³⁶ and another two-volume collection of his letters published in 1911 and 1914.³⁷ Somewhat frivolously, there is also available on line the Broadway song (from the musical *1776*) that opens with: "My name is Richard Henry Lee, Virginia is my home," and includes the line "For I am FFV, the first family, in the sovereign col-on-nee of Virginia."³⁸

Finally, here's Richard Henry Lee speaking for himself in a letter written from his home at Chantilly-on-the-Potomac, dated 31 May 1764 and addressed to an unidentified "My dear Sir" who is in England "on the other side of the water":

'Tis said the House of Commons readily resolved, that it had "a right to tax the subject here, without the consent of his representative;" and that, in consequence of this, they had proceeded to levy on us a considerable annual sum, for the support of a body of troops to be kept up in this quarter. Can it be supposed that those brave adventurous Britons, who originally conquered and settled these countries, through great dangers to themselves and benefit to the mother country, meant thereby to deprive themselves of the blessings of that free government of which they were members, and to which they had an unquestionable right? or can it be imagined that those they left behind them in Britain, regarded those worthy adventurers, by whose distress and enterprise they saw their country so much enlarged in territory, and increased in wealth, as aliens to their society, and meriting to be enslaved by their superior power? No, my dear sir, neither one nor the other of these can be true, because reason, justice, and the particular nature of the British constitution, nay, of all government, cry out against such opinions! Surely no reasonable being would, at the apparent hazard of his life, quit liberty for slavery; nor could it be just in the benefited, to repay their benefactors with chains instead of the most grateful acknowledgments. And as certain it is, that "the free possession of property, the right to be governed by laws made by our representatives, and the illegality of taxation without consent," are such essential principles of the British constitution, that it is a matter of wonder how men, who have almost imbibed them in their mother's milk, whose very atmosphere is charged with them, should be of opinion that the people of America were to be taxed without consulting their representatives!³⁹

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Gz9CAAAIAAJ>.

30. Matthews, John Carter. *Richard Henry Lee*. Williamsburg: Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission., 1978.

31. McGaughy, J. Kent. *Richard Henry Lee of Virginia: a portrait of an American revolutionary*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. See http://books.google.com/books?id=vSeu6_nvZQAC.

32. Virginia, Mary Elizabeth. *Richard Henry Lee of Virginia: A Biography*. Ph.D. Thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1992. Available on line at <http://www.leearchive.info/shelf/virginia/index.html>.

33. Kendig, Holly Eileen Munchhoff. *The Political Thought of Richard Henry Lee*. MS Thesis, Tufts University, 1970. Available on line at <http://leearchive.wlu.edu/reference/theses/kendig/index.html>.

34. Taylor, Anita Marie Grimm. *Richard Henry Lee, Rhetoric and Rebellion*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Missouri—Columbia, 1971. The cited quotations come from Chapter VI, "Perspective." Available on line at <http://www.leearchive.info/shelf/rhl-taylor/index.html>.

35. Lee, Richard H. *The Life of Richard Henry Lee, and His Correspondence with the Most Distinguished Men In America And Europe, Illustrative Of Their Characters, and of the Events Of The American Revolution*. Two volumes. Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1825. Available on line at <http://books.google.com/books?id=bkkWIBqWCCYC> and <http://books.google.com/books?id=vVwSAAAYAAJ>.

36. Thompson, John R., ed. *The Southern Literary Messenger*, volume 27 July-December. Richmond: Macfarlane, Fergusson, & Company, 1858. In six parts, pp. 22-30, 116-121, 182-190, 250-265, 324-332, and 433-446. Available on line at <http://books.google.com/books?id=EVQFAAAQAQAJ>.

37. Ballagh, James Curtis, collector and editor. *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*. Two volumes. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911 and 1914. At <http://books.google.com/books?id=hQsOAAAIAAJ> and <http://books.google.com/books?id=SNN2AAAAMAAJ>.

38. Edwards, Sherman, music, and Peter Stone, lyrics. *1776 a Musical*. New York: The Music Publisher, 1969. The song "I'm Richard Henry Lee" can be viewed on line at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2Tiar8FqXU>.

39. Ballagh, James Curtis, collector and editor. *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 1. New York: MacMillan, 1911, pp. 5-6. available on line at <http://www.archive.org/stream/richhenryleelet01richrich#page/4/mode/2up>.

Naturally, the British view was rather different. Here's what Daniel M. Fridenberg had to say:⁴⁰

At the end of the Seven Years War the British were triumphant but broke. William Pitt,⁴¹ much loved by the bankers and merchants for his reckless spending, had piled up a colossal debt. [And] by the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 ... the Indians were still in control of all land west of the Alleghenies. ... The last thing the Exchequer in London wanted, with a doubled national debt of £140 million sterling at the conclusion of the peace treaty, was a draining series of Indian wars. The land speculations of rich colonials and the need for virgin tobacco fields were smaller factors to them than the cost of Indian conflict. This position was sharpened by British resentment over what it considered the poor colonial contribution, both in men and money, during the French and Indian war.

At the time Lee wrote the words above the eventual American victory in the Revolution (at Yorktown in 1781) still lay seventeen years into the future. Evidence for the coming fight is perhaps already discernible in 1764 in the clash between Lee's attitude toward the British and the British attitude towards the Virginia planter oligarchs.

The Literature of the Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association

The Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 27 February 1766, have been published numerous times. They are on line in McIlwaine's *Journal of the House of Burgesses 1761-1765*⁴² and printed in volume 1 of *Revolutionary Virginia*. An original, signed copy of the Resolutions (written in the handwriting of Richard Henry Lee) is held at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond and a fine facsimile of that original is on display at the Westmoreland County Museum and Visitor Center in Montross. The museum facsimile is reproduced in Carl Flemer's book about Westmoreland County and the Northern Neck, where he provides an alphabetized list of the signers.⁴³

The Resolutions themselves and texts of three addresses concerning the Resolutions, delivered by local luminaries in Montross in May 1910, are on line in the link at this footnote.⁴⁴ This source offers the following explication of the text of the Resolutions:

We give the full text below of the famous Articles (sometimes referred to as resolutions) of "the Association in Westmoreland." They were prepared and offered by Richard Henry Lee at Leedstown, Va., February 27, 1766 (Judge Richard Parker presiding), and passed by the patriots of Westmoreland, one hundred and fifteen in number. They are taken from *The Virginia Historical Register and Literary Advertiser*, edited by William Maxwell, Vol. II (1849), pages 14-18. The original manuscript document is in the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., found among the papers of the late Major Henry Lee, eldest son of General Henry Lee (by Matilda Lee, of Stratford), Consul-General to Algiers during Jackson's Administration. P. 43.

In 1966 the Leedstown Resolutions Bicentennial Commission (appointed by the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors) held an essay contest in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the promulgation of the Resolutions. The first- and second-place entries (by a history professor from Maryland and a college student from Montross) were patched together and presented as a single article in the *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*. This article was recently made available on line⁴⁵ in connection with the 2010 recreation of the Leedstown and Tappahannock event. Despite its odd provenance, this article is a nice, useful, scholarly account of the history and background of the events of 27 February 1766. The article includes forty-four footnotes and a bibliography. A couple of years earlier, the same history professor from Maryland produced an also useful account of the Archibald Ritchie affair.⁴⁶

The Fincastle County Connection

In this section I'll explore some of the connections between Fincastle County in far western Virginia and Westmoreland County and the Northern Neck in the region of the Chesapeake Bay.

It is not immediately apparent what, if anything, Fincastle County has to do with the 1766 events that occurred along the banks of the Rappahannock River. Indeed, in 1766 Fincastle County did not even exist and it was a Virginia political jurisdiction for just four years. On 1 December 1772 legislation created Fincastle County when Botetourt County was split into two counties: a smaller

40. Friedenber, Daniel M. *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Land: The Plunder of Early America*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1992, pp. 104-105.

41. Parenthetically, there is a fine, large, painting of William Pitt by Charles Wilson Peale full of background allegorical images, that hangs today in the Westmoreland County Historical Museum in Montross. The painting is shown and discussed on pp. 44-47 in Flemer's book referenced below in footnote 42.

42. McIlwaine, H. R., ed. *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765*. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1908. At http://books.google.com/books?id=ffstAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=snippet&q=leedstown%20resolutions&f=false.

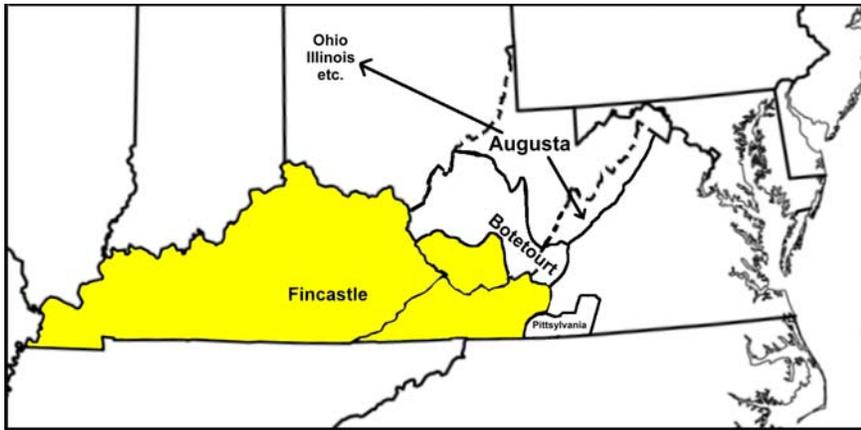
43. Flemer, Carl F., Jr., with Jenni Brockman. *Birthplace of the Nation: A Story Worth Telling*. (Leedstown, Westmoreland, and the Northern Neck, Leading the way to independence.) Oak Grove, Virginia: Carl F. Flemer, Jr., 2008. See pp. 38-43.

44. Wright, Thomas Roane Barnes, compiler. *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Parts I and II: A Short Chapter and Bright Day in Its History: 1653-1912*. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1912. At <http://books.google.com/books?id=SCjUGrFx5wMC>.

45. Matthews, John Carter and Sarah de Graffenried Robertson. "The Leedstown Resolutions." *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*, XVI(1), 1451-1506, 1966. Available on line at <http://nnvhs.web.officelive.com/Documents/NNVHS%20Magazine%201966%20Leedstown%20Resolutions.pdf>.

46. Matthews, John Carter. "Two men on a Tax: Richard Henry Lee, Archibald Ritchie, and the Stamp Act," pp. 96-108 in *The Old Dominion: essays for Thomas Perkins Abernethy*, Darrett Bruce Rutman, ed. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1964.

Botetourt and Fincastle. Legislation abolished Fincastle County four years later, on 31 December 1776, when it was divided into three new counties that eventually would become the entire future state of Kentucky, the southern half of the future state of West Virginia, and the western third of present Virginia.



The large, short-lived Fincastle County (shown at left in yellow) lay far from the Chesapeake Bay. However, as described in this article, in 1774-1775 there were significant connections between Fincastle County and distant Westmoreland County in Virginia's Northern Neck on the Bay. The Freeholders of Fincastle County adopted their Resolutions on 20 January 1775.



Virginia historical marker J-71 (at left) commemorates the adoption on 22 June 1774 of eleven resolves by the freeholders of Westmoreland County. On that day they opposed taxation without representation, declared that all the colonies "should firmly unite to resist the common Danger," offered support to their "Brothers of Massachusetts Bay who were "suffering" by having their "Harbour blocked up," declared a policy of nonimportation, decided to stop drinking tea, appointed Richard Henry Lee and Richard Lee as their representatives to the upcoming Virginia Convention, and adopted a total of eleven resolves.⁴⁷

They concluded their business with eleven rounds of "patriotick and loyal toasts." As far as I know, the matching of the number of resolves to the number of rounds of toasts was purely accidental.

Behind the marker can be seen the Westmoreland County Museum and Visitor center.

As I alluded to earlier, the hunt for western land was in 1766 a major activity among the oligarchs of the Northern Neck, and had so been for almost three decades — since the time that William Beverley of Essex County in 1736 had become the first Virginian to obtain substantial land grants in the northeastern end of the Shenandoah Valley, beyond the Blue Ridge mountains; a year earlier, Benjamin Borden of New Jersey had obtained the very first Shenandoah Valley land grant.⁴⁸ Patrick Henry, also before 1766, had personally explored southwest Virginia. Henry, accompanied by his brother-in-law William Christian, had traveled as far modern-day Bristol, Tennessee, in a search for lands in which he had acquired an interest following the bankruptcy of his father-in-law.⁴⁹ Many men on the Northern Neck in 1766 were interested in land in the future Fincastle county.

In May 1774, Governor Dunmore dissolved the House of Burgesses and in so doing initiated a process that would play out over the following ten months in which the freeholders in almost all the Virginia counties would gather to hold meetings. These county meetings produced documents that were sent to Williamsburg to be published. Often the last resolution recorded in the adopted document specifically so-stated. These publications have collectively have been called the county Resolutions or Resolves. The Westmoreland County freeholders acted early in that ten-month wave of protest; the Fincastle County freeholders acted late.

47. Volume 1, p. 163-165 in William J. Van Schreeven, Robert L. Scribner, and Brent Tarter, compilers and editors, *Revolutionary Virginia, the road to independence*, seven vols. Charlottesville: Published for Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission by the University Press of Virginia, 1973-1985.

48. Hofstra, Warren R. *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 40-41.

49. Meade, Robert Douthat. *Patrick Henry: Practical Revolutionary*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969, pp. 229-231.

In a recent publication I tabulated and summarized the 60-odd Virginia County actions that occurred between June 1774 and March 1775, with a particular focus on the actions of the Fincastle freeholders and the freeholders of the other western frontier counties. It was drafting that publication that first piqued my interest in Westmoreland County, which adopted its second set of Resolutions (in addition to those of February 1766 that I saw reenacted) Resolutions on 22 June 1774.⁵⁰ The Fincastle men, being heavily involved in the summer and fall of 1774 in fighting Dunmore's war against the Shawnese Indians far to the west in the Ohio country, did not meet until January of 1775. When they did meet, they adopted their Resolutions, but were not reported to have engaged in any rounds of toasting. However, since they probably drew up their resolutions in a tavern, such a thing is not beyond the realm of possibility.

My interest in Westmoreland County was further piqued when a number of years ago I discovered the 1953 work by Richard Barksdale Harwell published by the Virginia State Library and titled *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle*.⁵¹ Harwell noted (p. 9) that "the formation of county committees to support the spirit of American liberty and carry through the recommendations of the Continental Congress was the beginning of truly American self government." At the time Harwell wrote, the Virginia State Library had published records of the actions taken in four counties: Cumberland and Isle of Wight (published jointly in 1919) and Caroline and Southampton (published jointly in 1928).



At left (and also below) Greg Fisher portrays a "shirtman" and carries a cat o' nine tails intended to persuade Archibald Ritchie to change his mind about applying for a stamp to clear his vessel. Hunting shirts and frocks became the typical garb of the "Sons of Liberty," as they referred to themselves, and continued to be worn up to the start of the Revolution in 1775 when they were adopted by some elements of the 1st Virginia regiment and their style of dress became associated with Patrick Henry. Fisher, who represents one of the 400 men drawn up in two rows in 1766, is widely known for his characterization of General George Washington.⁵² In the background at left, Warren Deal portrays a similar character who told me when I inquired that he had come to Tappahannock from Fincastle.



At right, Jami Borek in the blue dress portrays Mrs. Archibald Ritchie, and Skip Nolen, with the white cravat, portrays a member of the Westmoreland County Association.

As Harwell describes the circumstances, his being able to write *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle* became possible because records of the proceedings of the Westmoreland Committee had not long before been found and identified in the collections of the Fordham University Library, from whence microfilms were obtained, while at about the same time Judge Charles W. Crush of Christiansburg⁵³ and other Montgomery County officials effected the transfer of many of the records from Virginia's revolutionary frontier to the state library. It was thus by a fortuitous historical accident that Westmoreland and Fincastle counties have become forever twinned in their resolves. Harwell's introductory essay to the documents (pp. 9-24) provides a convenient double history for the immediate pre-Revolutionary period in both counties. Having myself been already studying the Fincastle history, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to attend the Westmoreland reenactment.

A much more significant connection between Fincastle and Westmoreland counties is that the fighting ability of the riflemen of Fincastle County during Dunmore's War⁵⁴ created optimism in the mind of Richard Henry Lee back home in Westmoreland that an American Revolution could be won. In a letter to his brother Arthur Lee dated 24 February 1775, R. H. Lee wrote:

50. Glanville, Jim. "The Fincastle Resolutions." *The Smithfield Review*, 14: 69-119, 2010. See also Jim Glanville. "The Holstonia Bibliography" at <http://www.holstonia.net/files/HolstoniaBibliography102.pdf>.

51. Harwell, Richard Barksdale. *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle: Proceedings of the county committees, 1774-1776*. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1956.

52. The General Washington web site is at <http://www.genwashington.net>.

53. The records of the short-lived Fincastle County court are now at the court house in Christiansburg in Montgomery County.

54. Johnson, Patricia Givens. *General Andrew Lewis of Roanoke and Greenbrier*. Blacksburg: Walpa Publishing, 2nd. ed., 1994, pp. 165-185. Thwaites, Reuben Gold and Louise Phelps. *Documentary History of Dunmore's War, Compiled from the Draper Manuscripts...* Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905.

... A very small corrupted Junto in New York excepted, all N. America is now most firmly united and as firmly resolved to defend their liberties *ad infinitum* against every power on Earth that may attempt to take them away. The most effectual measures are everywhere taking to secure a sacred observance of the Association Manufactures go rapidly on, and the means of repelling force by force are universally adopting. The inclosed Address to the Virginia Delegates published a few days since in the *Gazette* will shew you the spirit of the Frontier Men This one County of Fincastle can furnish 1000 Rifle Men that for their number make most formidable light Infantry in the World. The six frontier Counties can produce 6000 of these Men who from their amazing hardihood, their method of living so long in the woods without carrying provisions with them, the exceeding quickness with which they can march to distant parts, and above all, the dexterity to which they have arrived in the use of the Rifle Gun. Their is not one of these Men who wish a distance less than 200 yards or a larger object than an Orange Every shot is fatal.⁵⁵

In writing this letter, Lee stated that he had read the resolutions adopted by the Freeholders of Fincastle County on 20 January 1775, and published in Williamsburg on 10 February.⁵⁶ It is also quite clear from Lee's remark about the "amazing hardihood" of the Fincastle men that Lee had earlier read the Fort Gower Resolutions⁵⁷ adopted in November of 1774 in Ohio by the officers of Lord Dunmore's army and was aware of the potential fighting prowess of men from the western Virginia frontier.



Fincastle County also has persons who portray characters from the period of the Revolutionary War. At left are some "western warriors" gathered at the Smithfield Plantation during the summer of 2009.

At right, men portraying Fincastle County warriors are seen preparing to fire a volley beside a Grand Union flag in the style adopted by John Paul Jones in Philadelphia in 1775. For this event, at the Smithfield Plantation's season-opening day on 3 April 2010, they were joined by a Civil War reenactor seen at the far right.

From left to right are seen: Fred Pierson's son (behind the flag), James Altice, Walt Barker, Dan Gracia, Fred Pierson, and Dan Hindeman.



55. Ballagh, James Curtis, collector and editor. *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*. Two volumes. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911, volume 1 pp. 131-132.

56. Author unknown. "Proceedings of the Fincastle County Committee, January 20, 1775." *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie) 10 February 1775, page 3. On line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.

57. Benjamin Ashby, clerk. "At a Meeting of the officers Under the Command of his Excellency the Right Honourable the EARL of DUNMORE...". *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), December 22, 1774, 1-2. On line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.

Fincastle County, however, has achieved one distinguishing honor for its Resolutions that no other Virginia jurisdiction can match. Fincastle's Resolutions have been philatelically immortalized.

One of the prominent participants in the creation of the Fincastle Resolutions was William Christian. His antecedents came from the Isle of Man.

Shown at the right (and used with permission of the Isle of Man Post Philatelic Bureau) is the "Carrying the Fincastle Resolutions" stamp issued by the Isle of Man Postal Authority with the following accompanying information: *American Revolution Bicentennial 1776-1976: Commemorating Col. William Christian 1976*; Date of Issue — 12 March 1976. Printed by Waddingtons Security Print Ltd.

The stamp carries the legend: "William Christian carrying the Fincastle Resolutions to Williamsburg." It depicts a mounted, galloping horseman over a shadowed copy of Purdie's *Virginia Gazette* (where the Fincastle Resolutions were published 10 February 1775) against a backdrop of mountains.

In addition to "Fincastle's" William Christian, the other, and much better known, Christian from the Isle of Man is Fletcher Christian, the mutineer of H.M.S. Bounty.



On 19 January 1975, at Fort Chiswell High School in Wythe County, an event was held to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Fincastle Resolutions. I do not know if the Resolutions were read at that event, though reenactors were definitely present and an address was made.⁵⁸



On 4 July 2010 there will be a public reading of the Fincastle Resolutions at the Smithfield Plantation house.⁵⁹ The house (at left) was built beginning circa 1774 by Fincastle Resolutions signer William Preston and named in honor of his wife Susanna Smith Preston.

Tickets may be purchased for interpreted tours of the Smithfield Plantation house during the months of April to December. On rare occasions I lead such tours.

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Jim Glanville
Blacksburg in former-Fincastle-County, Virginia
Posted on line on 11 May 2010

58. Editorial commentary in connection with the article by Thad Tate, "The Fincastle Resolutions: Southwest Virginia's Commitment," *Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society*, IX:19-29, 1975.

59. See the Smithfield Plantation event calendar at <http://www.smithfieldplantation.org/>.