



ESSEX COUNTY 1692

VOLUME 9

TAPPAHANNOCK, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 1975

Essex Resolutions, July 4, 1774 Exemplifies Revolution

Introduction

By CHARLES W. H. WARNER

The County of Essex is fortunate in having several very fine written examples of colonial political thinking which show those ideals which led to the American Revolution.

On March 13, 1676, a century before the American Revolution, the Rappahannock County Court passed fifteen resolutions entitled Grievances of Rappahannock County. These Grievances expressed many of the ideals of Bacon's Rebellion, which was to last into the fall of that year. The signers of the Grievances were Warwick Commack, Alex. Donyephann, Henry Awbrey and Thomas Goldman. This document shows concern for: worthy ministers to fill the churches, an honorable peace with the Indians, that all counties may share an equal burden for defense in the Indian War, unreasonable tax assessments, fair distribution of the tax load, honest and qualified office holders, a government building for the storage of weapons, a more central location for the Assembly to meet and "That as often as there shall be occasion for any new election of Burgesses that the free men of the country who pay their proportionable parts of all rates of assessments may be admitted with house-keepers to give their votes for such election." Therefore we know there was concern in 1676 in what was to become Essex County for worthy and qualified ministers and office holders, fair taxation, efficiency in government operation and voting as well as for defense of the Colony.

Another outstanding document of Colonial rights in Essex County was that paper signed by Archibald Ritchie on Feb. 27, 1766 in Tappahannock. By this document, Ritchie promised not to abide by The Stamp Act which was passed by the British Parliament without the approval of Virginia's or any other Colonial legislative body. Thus Essex gave notice to the world that on Feb. 27, 1766, it would no longer tolerate taxation without representation.

Then on the eve of the Revolution, Essex County produced another great statement of Colonial rights. While the Westmoreland County Resolutions were the first passed by any County in Virginia in protest of the British blockade of the port of Boston, the Essex Resolutions followed in less than two weeks. The Essex Resolutions state all the central ideas which caused the colonists to revolt from England. These resolutions

are full of the desire for fair treatment and economic and political rights.

At a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of Essex County, Virginia, at the courthouse thereof, on Saturday, the 4th of July, 1774, seriously to consider the present dangers which threaten ruin to American liberty, Mr. John Upshaw being chosen moderator, the following resolves were proposed and unanimously agreed to:

First. Resolved, That we will at all times and upon all occasions bear true and faithful allegiance to his Majesty, King George the Third, and as free men we have always been and ever shall be willing constitutionally to give and grant liberally our property for the support of his crown and dignity and the preservation of our parent state, but that we can never consent to part with it on any other terms.

Second. Resolved, That the Legislature of this Colony, for the purpose of internal taxation, is distinct from that of Britain, founded upon the principles of the British constitution and equal in all respects to the purposes of legislation and taxation within this Colony.

Third. Resolved, that the people of this Colony in particular and of America in general have a clear and absolute right to dispose of their property by their own consent expressed by themselves, or by their representatives in Assembly; and any attempt to tax or take their money from them in any other manner and all other acts tending to enforce submission to them is an exertion of power contrary to natural justice, subversive to the English constitution, destructive of our charters, and oppressive.

Fourth. Resolved, That the town of Boston, in our sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay, is now suffering in the common cause of North America for the just opposition to such acts, and it is indispensably necessary that all the colonies should unite firmly in defense of our common rights.

Fifth. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that an agreement to stop all exports to and all imports from Great Britain and the West Indies, firmly entered into and religiously complied with, will at all times prove a safe and infallible means of securing us against the evils of any unconstitutional and tyrannical

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Essex Resolutions

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nical acts of Parliament, and may be adopted upon the principles of self-preservation—the great law of nature.

Sixth. Resolved, That the inhabitants of this county will firmly join with the other counties of this Colony and the other colonies on this continent, or a majority of them, to stop all exports to and imports from Great Britain and the West Indies and all other ports of the world, except the colonies of North America, if such a measure shall be deemed expedient by the deputies at the General Congress; and whatever agreement the Congress shall come to for the advancing of the common cause of North America, relating to exports, imports or otherwise, ought to be considered as binding as any act of the Legislature, and that we will use our utmost endeavor to support and maintain such general agreement, at the expense of our lives and fortunes.

Seventh. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that the several courts in this colony ought not to proceed to the forwarding or trial of civil causes until our exports are opened.

Eighth. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that the East Indian Company, having a desire to monopolize a great part of the American trade, to the injury of the other merchants of Britain trading to North America, and knowing well the fatal consequences that must have resulted from their fixing a precedent for future taxes, by importing tea into the colonies, became the willing instrument of the ministry to destroy American liberty, and deserve the loss they have sustained.

Ninth. Resolved, That we do most heartily concur with our late Representatives in their resolve for the disuse of tea, and that we will not hereafter purchase any East India commodities whatsoever.

Tenth. Resolved, That the spirited conduct of the town of Boston hath been serviceable to the cause of freedom (all other methods having failed), and that no reparation ought to be made to the East India Company or other assistants for any injury they have sustained, unless it be the express condition on which all our grievances shall be removed.

Eleventh. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that any general censure of the conduct of the town of Boston respecting the tea, without allowing to them the motives of resistance upon the principles of public virtue and necessity, is inimical to American liberty, and we are persuaded that none but ministerial hirelings and professed enemies of American freedom will adopt a language so impolitic which manifestly tends to create a disunion of sentiment at this time fatal to America.

Twelfth. Resolved, That the Parliament have no right to pass an act to remove our persons to Great Britain, or any other place whatsoever, to be tried for any offense, and that we are determined not to submit thereto.

Thirteenth. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that no merchant in this or any other colony on this continent shall advance the goods now on hand higher than they are at present or have been for some time, and that the merchants in the several counties sign an agreement to that effect.

Fourteenth. Resolved, That a subscription be set on foot for raising provisions for the poor of Boston, who

now suffer by the blockading up of their port, and that Robert Beverly, John Lee and Muscoe Garnett, in St. Anne's Parish, and Archibald Ritchie and John Upshaw, in the upper part of South Farnham Parish, and Meriwether Smith and James Edmondson, in the lower part thereof, take in subscriptions for that purpose, who are to consign what may be raised to some proper person to be distributed; and the before-mentioned gentlemen are empowered to charter a vessel and send it to Boston.

Fifteenth. Resolved, That this meeting have the deepest sense of the injuries in which the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain must necessarily be involved by a non-importation resolution, they having placed an almost unlimited confidence in us for a series of years, and by that means have the greatest part of their fortunes lodged in our hands, and that nothing but the desire of preserving our liberties could induce us to adopt a measure big with such melancholy consequences.

Sixteenth. Resolved, That James Edmondson and William Roane, Esquires, the late Representatives of this county, be, as they are hereby appointed, deputies to represent us at the general meeting of deputies for the several counties of this colony, on the first day of August, in Williamsburg; and we desire that they will exert their best abilities for the security of our constitutional rights and liberties, and to appoint deputies to meet at the General Congress the deputies of the other colonies on this continent.

Seventeenth. Resolved, That the clerk transmit the foregoing proceedings to the printers to be published in their Gazette.

WM. YOUNG,
Clerk of the Meeting.

Independence and the Essex County Court

by CHARLES W. H. WARNER

In the minutes of the Essex County Court held on April 15, 1776 the first changes which indicate the separation from England begin to appear, in the form of the heading.

Before this date the heading preceding the names of those on the County Court had always appeared as—"Present His Majesty's Justices". Thus it appeared in the minutes of the Court meeting of February, 1776. The names of the members of the County Court always followed "at a Court held for Essex County at Tappan-hannock on" . . . and then the date. This phrase with the names of the justices always appeared before the business transacted by the Court both before and after independence. In the minutes of the Court meeting for April 15, 1776, the phrase "Present His Majesty's Justices", is omitted for the first time in the heading, between the place of meeting and the names of the justices. Nothing is written in place of "Present His Majesty's Justices". This clearly indicates the mood of Colonial America at this time. The American people, including those in Essex County, Virginia wished to replace the British but they had not actually reached the point of stating any new authority.

With the public proclamation of the July 4, 1776 independence resolutions by Thomas Jefferson, things

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had changed and a new authority in place of the king was proclaimed—"Under the Commonwealth of Virginia". This phrase precedes the names of the justices for the meeting of the Essex County Court on Aug. 19, 1776. The former justices, Thomas Roane, John Upshaw, Meriwether Smith and William Smith were continued with the names William Roane and John Beale added. The Court membership does not indicate any radical change either socially or politically.

The First order of business was to require that "John Corrie, Gent. High Sheriff and Thomas Bowler and Abraham Montague sub Sheriffs by him appointed with the approbation of the Court took the oath prescribed by the ordinance of Convention". These men, as the justices, had therefore to take the oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Another ordered to take the oath of allegiance as prescribed by the ordinance of Convention was John Warden, Gent. Attorney at Law. William Roane, James Edmondson and John Beale, Gent were recommended to "his Excellency the Governor as proper persons to be Sheriffs." Henry Garnett was recommended to be a Captain in the county militia, Thomas Oneal a Lieutenant and Obadeah Boulware an Ensign. William Salvator Jones is recommended to be Ensign in Captain Waring's Company and William Waring Junior Lieutenant. The general business of the Court was concerned with the usual matters; wills estates, roads, slaves and tax collection. Other names mentioned in relation to these matters were: Francis Brezandine, Andrew Allen, John Brooks, Thomas Brooks, Philip Cheney, Luke Covington, John Webb, James Emerson, Charles Launder, Robert Hurley, John Medley, William Mullin, William Simcoe, William Pallerson, Thomas Ryland, Richard Wright, Muscoe Garnett, Thomas Boulware, John Lee and William Goulding.

The minutes are signed by Thomas Roane, Gent. (Clerk)

SOURCES

The Resolutions of July 4, 1774 are taken from *Tidewater Tales* by W. C. Garnett, pages 31 to 34. The information in the article Independence and the Essex County Court was found by Mr. Arnold Motley, Clerk of the Essex Court and may be found in Order Book No. 29, pages 297, 299, 300.

Society Holds Its July Meeting At "Adams Spring"

"Adam's Spring" is the home of Mrs. Nell Greening Keen. It was a lovely afternoon and all were seated in the shade of the trees and our president dispensed with all business and introduced Miss Willie Weathers, who had chosen as the subject of her address "The Story Behind A Picture" which was based on the steel engraving the "Burial of Latané," a very popular picture throughout the Confederacy immediately following the War Between The States. It was very interesting and she brought in many sidelights concerning the families depicted in this engraving. It was a very appropriate subject for our meeting at "Adam's Spring" because the Latanés and Lewises connected with the picture had their country homes in this same neighborhood.

After Miss Weathers' talk about 35 members and guests enjoyed delicious refreshments and Mrs. Keen

graciously invited everyone to see her lovely home and how she had restored it. We all enjoyed meeting her mother, Mrs. Greening, and seeing the house and all the lovely things in it. Everyone expressed gratitude to Mrs. Keen for allowing us to meet at "Adam's Spring" and we hope this will be the first of many future meetings to be held at the lovely old homes in Essex County and that more of our members will be present next summer.

MRS. WILLIAM A. WRIGHT, *Secretary*

Paul S. Tribble, Jr. Addresses Historical Society October 15

Two prominent Essex County residents, Senator Austin Meredith Tribble and Dr. John Tribble Thomas Hundley, were the subject of the address. Senator Tribble represented this area in the State Senate for some years and then returned to his first love, the practice of law. He stood for integrity and honesty in his political life and set the example for others to follow. He was born at the Tribble home in Essex "Johnville" in 1818, the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Waring Tribble.

Dr. John Tribble Thomas Hundley was a prominent minister in the Christian Church and served not only Rappahannock Christian Church at Dunnsville but many others. Dr. J. T. T., as he was familiarly called, was also a prominent educator—he saved the present Lynchburg College from going under and served as its president for many years. He was honored by the College in many ways, one of its largest buildings being named for him, Hundley Hall. He was a well loved citizen of Essex. Mr. Paul S. Tribble, Jr., is the present Commonwealth's Attorney of Essex County.

At the business session preceding the address, our president, Mr. Hilton said he had run into Miss Ann Dibble, who spent several months in Essex last spring and who is now working in Gloucester and Mathews Counties. Miss Dibble told him that her work in Essex was the most productive with Westmoreland County running second in her search for Southern made antiques to catalog for the Museum in Winston-Salem, N. C.

Mr. Hilton also announced that Mr. Muscoe Garnett of "Elmwood" would be delighted to have the Historical Society hold their July, 1976 meeting at "Elmwood." Mr. Hilton appointed Mrs. J. M. Evans, Mrs. Charles DeShazo, and Mr. Joseph Ewing to the nominating committee to bring in a slate of officers to our January meeting.

Mr. John McManus, Chairman of the Historical Society's Bicentennial Committee gave an interesting report of the activities of his committee and the County Bicentennial Committee. Mr. McManus also spoke of the superb job Philadelphia has done in restoring Independence Square and Independence Hall and said it was something everyone should visit.

Mr. Charles Warner called attention to the archaeological digging of Robert Harper, an eighteen year old Essex high school student. His latest find is an old pottery kiln believed to be in the period 1680 to 1720. Robert Harper has dug at thirty two historical sites and found many artifacts.

Mr. Hilton after welcoming several new members and thanking Mr. Tribble for his splendid talk adjourned the meeting.

MRS. WILLIAM A. WRIGHT, *Secretary*

Essex County Bicentennial Commission Report

The Essex County Bicentennial Commission has completed its initial presentation of local history in the form of two episodes and plans extensive expansion of the pageant in 1976. Also in 1976 there are tentative plans for a project connected with George Washington's birthday, wide publication of Essex County attractions of historic importance, the hosting of the Bicentennial Wagon Train in June and greater involvement of young people both through the schools and the Essex Recreation Program. The long range plan calls for an effort to promote a local museum.

The two episodes presented during the Summer Festival last August dealt with an Archibald Ritchie scene in which Leedstown delegates under Capt. Lee demanded that Ritchie vow never to ship to the Mother Country so long as The Stamp Act was in effect or until the Assembly of this Colony approved such action and presented a scene of three Baptist ministers preaching from the jail while imprisoned for taking part in the planting of Piscataway Church.

The portion of the pageant shown was directed by Joseph Swonk of Rappahannock Community College, English Department, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Margaret Hilton, a member of the Commission here. The scripts were written by Catherine P. DeShazo, chairman of the County Commission. Over one hundred persons took part in the production. The Rappahannock Community College taped the entire program for television presentation and presented a copy of it to the Essex Bicentennial Commission. This work was done by Bruce Harding of the College staff and his assistants including Mrs. Melany Carpenter of Essex. This tape is available for showing at meetings or for out-of-county television coverage preceding the coming events.

Charles Warner, a member of the Essex Commission, has written special articles for both the Northern Neck Historical Society Magazine and the Essex County Historical Bulletin, both of which he edits. He is also presenting a series of monthly "Bicentennial Minutes" each day over the Tappahannock Radio Station, WRAR. Robert Harper, a student at Essex High School, is doing archeological diggings and has produced proof of early settlement in the county. His findings are being published in news stories and historical and archeological papers. Catherine P. DeShazo is writing several articles for general publications, is preparing a brochure to be distributed by the Tappahannock-Essex County Chamber of Commerce, and is writing new episodes for presentation during 1976. Dorothy Warner Gardner is compiling a list of Revolutionary soldiers from Essex based on the work of her father, the late Thomas Warner. A Cookbook has been compiled under the chairmanship of Mrs. Nell Lee Keen. This has been printed and is expected to be on sale in time for Christmas distribution this year.

Important research is being done by other members of the Commission. All research findings are to be filed with Arnold Motley, Clerk, and all are available to the public in the Clerk's Office during office hours but may not be taken from that location. In addition to Commission members' papers there are some most

valuable papers being given and or loaned to the Commission for the duration of the Bicentennial. Further announcements will be made as these are filed with Mr. Motley. Mrs. B. F. Harrison, a member of the Commission, is developing a paper on Black History of the area. This is a very difficult assignment as records are scarce. She has asked that the people of the area give her any information they may have pertaining to this subject.

The EBC meets on the second Wednesday evening every other month and all meetings are open to the public. The commission welcomes suggestions from interested citizens.

The Essex County Board of Supervisors allocated \$1,000 for routine operation of the Essex Bicentennial Commission. With this the EBC is financing one half the cost of the publication of this Bulletin and meeting minimal expenses incurred by Commission activities. The Supervisors also approved up to \$300 to be used in cooperation with Richmond County and the Rappahannock Community College for the purpose of maintaining a tourist information booth at the North Campus throughout the Bicentennial on a day and night basis. This center will carry pictures of and a running commentary on the attractions of the two counties. The other major expense will be entertaining the Wagon Train next June. It is anticipated that the EBC will seek additional money from the Supervisors for this event.

Members of the EBC are being called on to speak at varied meetings. Catherine DeShazo, John McManus, Charles Warner and Marie Harrison conducted day-long sessions for the Future Homemakers of Essex High School in October. The EBC will assist the Chamber of Commerce in conducting an orientation workshop at which sales personnel will be briefed on the county's historical offerings. Other activities will be reported via local media as they take place. In all, 1976 will be a Red Letter year for Essex.

CATHERINE P. DESHAZO, *Chairman—*
Essex County Bicentennial Commission

Officers of the Society

President Mr. Sidney J. Hilton Sr.
Vice-President Mr. Arnold Motley
Treasurer Mrs. Percy R. Eubank
Secretary Mrs. William A. Wright

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman, Mr. Charles W. H. Warner; *Members*, Mrs. William A. Wright, Mrs. J. M. Evans, Mr. Jeffrey M. O'Dell.

Meetings are held quarterly in the Essex County Court House. Dues are \$2.00 per year. For copies of publication send 60¢ to Mrs. J. M. Evans, Box 8, Tappahannock, Virginia.
