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**THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION IN  
ESSEX COUNTY 1765-1774**

The Stamp Act • The Ritchie Affair • The Leedstown Resolutions  
Growing British & Colonial Tensions: Parliamentary Provocations  
& Colonial Responses, Including Essex County's July 9, 1774  
Resolutions Before Virginia's 1774 Revolutionary Convention

by Wright H Andrews, Jr



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# THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION IN ESSEX COUNTY: 1765-1774

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• The Leedstown Resolutions •

Growing British & Colonial Tensions: Parliamentary  
Provocations & Colonial Responses, Including Essex  
County's July 9, 1774 Resolutions Before Virginia's 1774  
Revolutionary Convention

*by Wright H. Andrews, Jr.*

*The Road to Revolution in Essex County series highlights  
how our county forefathers were actively engaged in  
Virginia's patriotic mainstream as the colonies moved  
forward on the lengthy, winding road to political revolution,  
war and ultimately independence and adoption of our U.S.  
Constitution.*



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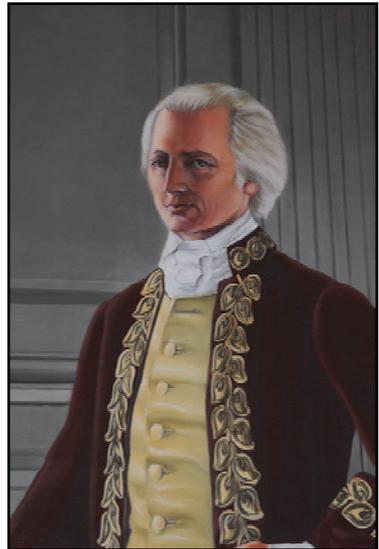
The Essex History Museum is located at 218  
Water Lane. Please visit [www.ecmhs.org](http://www.ecmhs.org) for  
more information and upcoming events.

In 1763, the Seven Years War, which involved most of the major European powers, ended with the Treaty of Paris. This settlement included this broad global conflict's American portion, which we know as the French and Indian War, where the British and American colonials battled the French and their Indian allies primarily along the colonies' western borders. The British government then revised certain of its policies for dealing with its American colonies in the aftermath of the war. Parliament issued the Proclamation of 1763, that prohibited settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains. This move greatly upset many leading gentlemen in Virginia, including many in the Tidewater, as they were seeking to maintain and expand their fortunes by speculating in western lands. In 1764, Parliament passed the Sugar Act, revising the tax on molasses and strengthening its enforcement. This resulted in considerable concern and colonial opposition, particularly in the New England colonies.

## The Stamp Act of 1765

Another subsequent measure passed the following year generated even greater consternation and caused Virginians to become much more active in protesting and contesting the British government's new colonial policies. The war had left England with huge debts, and Parliament took the position that the American colonies should bear more of their own defense costs. Accordingly, it passed the Stamp Act on March 22, 1765. In essence, the Stamp Act required colonists to pay a modest tax on all of the printed documents they used. This included newspapers and publications, legal documents, ship's papers, licenses and other printed materials.

Violators of the Act also were to be tried in British Admiralty Courts, thus denying colonists a trial by a jury of their peers, which they considered another of their basic rights as Englishmen. The funds collected were to be used to help pay for the 10,000 British troops stationed along the colonies' western frontier.



*Richard Henry Lee*

Colonists reacted strongly against this tax, which was viewed as a dangerous precedent for future taxation by Parliament without colonists' involvement. Earlier taxes had been deemed measures to regulate commerce, but the Stamp Act was seen as a direct tax on the colonies without approval of the colonial legislatures. Parliament's action triggered a nerve within the colonists' psyche as they saw this as imposing taxation without representation, which they deemed a violation of their basic rights as Englishmen. Citizens in various colonies engaged in a variety of protest activities against the Stamp Act. In Virginia, Patrick Henry led the opposition to the Stamp Act in the House of Burgesses. He offered a number of resolves against the Act, and on May 30, 1765, the House ultimately passed four of them, which are generally known as the "Virginia Resolves."

In essence, the Resolves declared that colonists possessed the same rights as citizens living in England, including the right to be taxed only by their representatives and that these rights had heretofore always been recognized and had never been forfeited.

The following four resolves offered by Patrick Henry were adopted by the House of Burgesses on May 30, 1765:

*Resolved, that the first adventurers and settlers of His Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and all other His Majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this His Majesty's said colony, all the liberties, privileges, franchises, and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed by the people of Great Britain.*

*Resolved, that by two royal charters, granted by King James I, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all liberties, privileges, and immunities of denizens and natural subjects to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within the Realm of England.*

*Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.*

*Resolved, that His Majesty's liege people of this his most ancient and loyal colony have without interruption enjoyed the inestimable right of being governed by such laws, respecting their internal policy and taxation, as are derived from their own consent, with the approbation of their sovereign, or his substitute; and that the same has never been forfeited or yielded up, but has been constantly recognized by the kings and people of Great Britain.*

Henry's fifth resolution, which was debated but ultimately not adopted, provided:

*Resolved, therefore that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony and that every Attempt to vest such Power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.*

The following two additional resolutions were not passed by the Virginia Assembly, but were reported in several newspapers:

*Resolved, That His Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this Colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the General Assembly aforesaid.*

*Resolved, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that any person or persons other than the General Assembly of this Colony, have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to His Majesty's Colony.*

Not surprisingly, Virginia's Colonial Governor Fauquier disapproved of the adoption of Henry's proposals, and accordingly he dissolved the House of Burgesses in response. Leading citizens in Essex and other Tidewater counties were quite aware of the Stamp Act, its implications, and the debate that had taken place in the House of Burgesses. They were strongly opposed to paying the tax, both on principle and to some degree because many were facing economic difficulties as the economy was in a recession.

## The Ritchie Affair & The Leedstown Resolutions

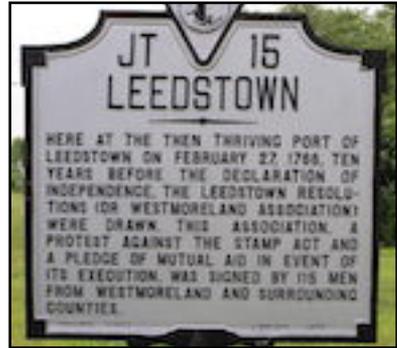
Therefore, when Archibald Ritchie of Tappahannock, a wealthy and prominent Scottish merchant, brazenly stated publicly at the Richmond County Court in early February of 1766, that he intended to comply with the tax and buy stamps as required for his ships' documents, many opponents of the Act became both very alarmed and quite angry. They feared that if the powerful, well-known Ritchie broke ranks others would likely follow and opposition to the Stamp Act might fail.

Leading planters along the Rappahannock promptly began planning to rein in Ritchie and prevent him from supporting and complying with the Act. It is worth noting that it appears that to some degree the leading gentry's motivation was based not only on the position Ritchie was stating but also on the fact that, while powerful, he appears to have been viewed as haughty and arrogant and was not at this point in time well-liked by some of the gentry.

In any case, leading men like Thomas Ludwell Lee and his brother Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland County began strongly promoting the idea of confronting Ritchie and forcing him to publicly apologize and promise not to comply with the Act. While the Lees and others were planning for leaders from the entire Northern Neck and nearby counties to go to Tappahannock to confront Ritchie, some of the local Essex people decided they would initiate a confrontation of their own and deal with their fellow Essex resident. On Essex Court Day, February 21, 1766, around 70 people showed up for the confrontation. Col. Francis Waring and Col. William Roane (Ritchie's own brother-in-law), who both were leading citizens and had represented Essex in the House of Burgesses, were Essex County's primary opponents of the Stamp Act. They led a march to Ritchie's house where they met with him and voiced their concerns. One report says that a British Man of War in the harbor landed troops to disburse the men. Other reports say that Ritchie responded to the local citizens that he had cleared his ship out of the port without stamps and this answer reportedly was enough for the assembled mob and they dispersed. Ritchie reportedly wrote a letter pledging not to use stamps, but, if so, this did not appease public opposition to him, especially in the Northern Neck where people believed that Ritchie had not given in to the Essex group and not adequately paid for his misguided actions.

Richard Henry Lee, and his brothers at Stratford Hall and other Northern Neck gentry including George Washington's brothers,

continued their plans to have a more definitive confrontation. Thomas Ludwell Lee sent out an urgent call for leaders from various Rappahannock River Valley counties to come to a meeting to discuss opposition to the Stamp Act and how best to deal with Ritchie. Plans were to have a big meeting at Leedstown followed by a meeting in Tappahannock the next day where Ritchie would be confronted. Accordingly, on the evening of February 27, 1766, over 100 gentlemen from nearby counties – Middlesex, Essex, Caroline, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Prince William, Fredericksburg, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond and Lancaster – met at Old Bray’s Church (or another location depending on the account) and debated how to respond. These men called themselves “Sons of Liberty” and “Friends of Liberty,” as did Stamp Act opponents in some other colonies.



At the end of the day, 115 members signed on to what are called the Leedstown Resolutions, the Westmoreland Resolutions, or more properly, “The Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 27 February 1766.” The Resolutions, which were drafted by Richard Henry Lee, set forth the principles on which their opposition to the Stamp Act was based. Although this is not the place for an extended discussion of Richard Henry Lee, it should be noted that he was truly one of the leading Founding Fathers of our nation, albeit that he is far less well known than many others. Lee, among other things, served in the House of Burgesses and there was a strong opponent to the Stamp Act. He later served as President of the Continental Congress, he offered the resolution in Congress calling for American Independence, he signed the Declaration of Independence, and was one of Virginia’s first Senators after Independence.

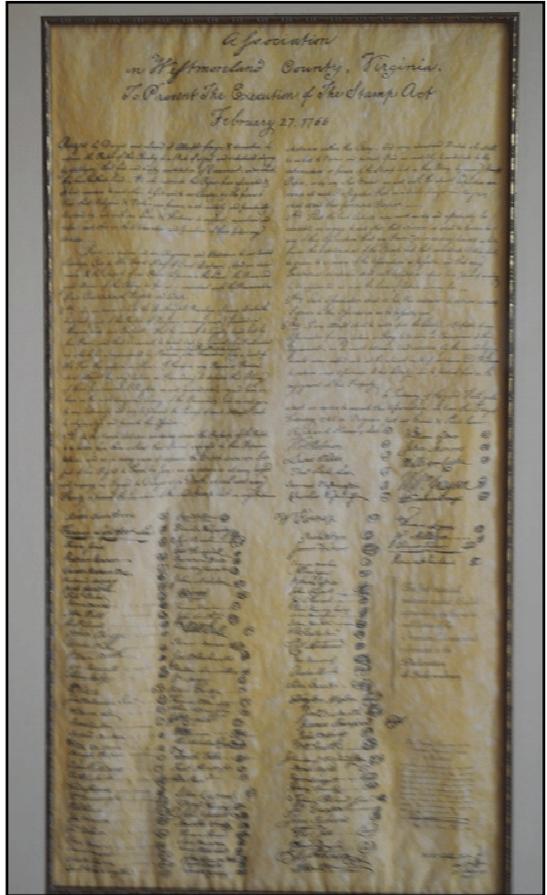
Richard Henry Lee and his brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee from Menokin, both signed the Leedstown Resolutions.

The 14 signers from Essex County included: James Edmondson, John Lee, William Roane, Meriwether Smith, John Upshaw, Francis Waring, John Bland, Jr., James Booker, John Edmondson, Jr. and Sr., Ebenezer Fisher, Reuben Meriwether, James Webb and Smith Young.

The Resolutions provided as follows:

*“Roused by danger and alarmed at attempts, foreign and domestic, to reduce the people of this country to a state of abject and detestable slavery by destroying that free and happy condition of government under which they have hitherto lived, We, who subscribe this paper, have associated and do bind ourselves to each other, to God, and to our country, by the firmest ties that religion and virtue can frame, most sacredly and punctually to stand by and with our lives and fortunes, to support, maintain, and defend each other in the observance and execution of these following articles –*

*FIRST: We declare all due allegiance and obedience to our lawful Sovereign, George the Third, King of Great Britain. And we determine to the utmost of our power to preserve the laws, the peace and good order of this Colony, as far as is consistent with the preservation of our Constitutional rights*



The Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, February 27, 1766

and liberty.

*SECONDLY: As we know it to be the Birthright privilege of every British subject (and of the people of Virginia as being such) founded on Reason, Law, and Compact; that he cannot be legally tried, but by his peers; that he cannot be taxed, but by consent of a Parliament, in which he is represented by persons chosen by the people, and who themselves pay a part of the tax they impose on others. If, therefore, any person or persons shall attempt, by any action, or proceeding, to deprive this Colony of these fundamental rights, we will immediately regard him or them, as the most dangerous enemy of the community; and we will go to any extremity, not only to prevent the success of such attempts, but to stigmatize and punish the offender.*

*THIRDLY: As the Stamp Act does absolutely direct the property of the people to be taken from them without their consent expressed by their representatives and as in many cases it deprives the British American Subject of his right to trial by jury; we do determine, at every hazard, and paying no regard to danger or to death, we will exert every faculty, to prevent the execution of the said Stamp Act in any instance whatsoever within this Colony. And every abandoned wretch, who shall be so lost to virtue and public good, as wickedly to contribute to the introduction or fixture of the Stamp Act in this Colony, by using stamp paper; or by any other means, we will, with the utmost expedition, convince all such profligates that immediate danger and disgrace shall attend their prostitute purposes.*

*FOURTHLY: That the last article may most surely and effectually be executed, we engage to each other, that whenever it shall be known to any of this association, that any person is so conducting himself as to favor the introduction of the Stamp Act, that immediate notice shall be given to as many of the association as possible; and that every individual so informed, shall, with expedition, repair to a place of meeting to be appointed as near the scene of action as may be.*

*FIFTHLY: Each associator shall do his true endeavor to obtain as many signers to this association, as he possibly can.*

*SIXTHLY: If any attempt shall be made on the liberty or property of any associator for any action or thing to be done in consequence of this agreement, we do most solemnly bind ourselves by the sacred engagements above entered into, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, to restore such associate to his liberty and to protect him in the enjoyment of his property.*

*In testimony of the good faith with which we resolve to execute this association we have this 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 1766 in Virginia, put our hands and seals hereto.”*

After adopting the resolutions, most of the gentlemen proceeded the next morning to take the ferry across the Rappahannock at Layton’s Landing near Leedstown and rode to Tappahannock to confront Ritchie. When they arrived, their ranks were greatly inflated by many smaller planters and area residents who had been alerted to what was going to occur.

About 400 men lined the streets near Ritchie’s home, which then was what is now known as the Customs House. A Committee went to Ritchie and immediately demanded that he take an oath supporting the Resolutions and sign

a statement of apology and promise not to abide by the Act. He was advised that the alternative was that “his Person should be taken and stripp’d Naked to his Waist, tied to the tail of a cart, and drawn to the public Pillory, where he should be fixed for One Hour, and if in that Time he did not comply, that he should be brought up by the Whole Company to Leedstown, there to be farther determined on as should seem expedient to the Friends of Liberty.”



*Customs House, Tappahannock*

should be brought up by the Whole Company to Leedstown, there to be farther determined on as should seem expedient to the Friends of Liberty.”

Ritchie asked for time to consider the situation, but his plea was rejected. He accordingly signed and swore to the following statement which the Committee presented to him:

“Sensible now of the high insult I offered this country by declaring at Richmond Court lately, my determination to make use of Stamp Paper for clearing out my Vessels; and being Convinced such Proceeding would establish a Precedent by which the hateful Stamp Act might be introduced into this Colony, to the Utter Destruction of Pubic Liberty; I do most submissively, in Presence of the Public, Sign this Paper meaning to show my deep Remorse, for having formed so execrable a Design: and I do hereby solemnly Promise and Swear on the Holy Evangels, that no Vessel of mine shall sail cleared on Stamp Paper, and that I never will on any Pretense make Use of, or Cause to be made Use of Stamp Paper, unless the Use of such Paper, shall be authorized by the General Assembly of this Colony.”



*McCall-Brockenbrough House at  
St.Margaret's School, Tappahannock*

This Tappahannock gathering was reportedly the largest public protest in Virginia against the Stamp Act. It was front page news later in an article in the May 16, 1766, issue of the *Virginia Gazette*.

Ritchie learned his lesson, and later became an ardent patriot.

Interestingly, however, Tappahannock's second leading Scottish merchant, Archibald McCall, who held the post of King's Attorney (i.e., prosecutor), nonetheless still vowed to enforce the Stamp Act. Accordingly, another mob gathered on May 6, 1766, about two months after Ritchie's apology, and moved to McCall's house, which we know as the McCall-Brockenbrough House on St. Margaret's school campus.

There are only limited accounts of all that may have happened, but apparently the crowd smashed windows, shot guns, and may have physically assaulted McCall. McCall's later attempt to prosecute the rioters got nowhere. In any case, Stamp Act protests came to an end shortly after the McCall incident. The Stamp Act was repealed on

March 18, 1766, but this news did not reach the colonies for several months. It was announced in the *Virginia Gazette* on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and a formal Proclamation of its repeal was issued in Williamsburg on June 9, 1766.

Essex County residents can be proud of their forefathers' actions to defend colonial citizens' rights in these Stamp Act protests. The Ritchie affair clearly demonstrated, about a decade before the Revolution began, that Virginia colonists were informed and concerned regarding governmental policies. Leading gentry in Essex and the Northern Neck were in close communication and came together to put forth united opposition to the Act and to the underlying fundamental problems it raised in denying colonists their historical rights as Englishmen, including being taxed only by their chosen representatives and the right to a trial by their peers. This pre-Revolution incident shows how the leading gentry were aware of and acting in concert with positions taken in other colonies, and quite significantly, how the gentry were able to draw in smaller planters and rally them to fight for colonists' rights.

## Additional Parliamentary Provocations & Colonial Responses

The basic constitutional issues that divided the colonies and Britain became clear during the 1765 Stamp Act crisis, but it took another decade for the Revolutionary War to begin in 1775, and then another 12 years for the American victory and adoption of the Constitution. The next section of this article deals with the period after the Stamp Act up to the First Continental Congress, held September 5, 1774 – October 26, 1774, when the colonies were on the cusp of the Revolution. While the article's primary purpose is to relate how Essex County citizens were engaged during this time, most of the major pre-Revolutionary events in the colonies took place in other colonies, especially Massachusetts, or in Virginia's case, in Williamsburg, the colonial capital. Therefore, it is necessary here to paint the broader picture of key developments elsewhere and then highlight our local forefathers' involvement and response.

Although tensions between the colonies and Britain cooled for a time after 1765, the British felt that additional colonial revenue was still needed to help pay the debts from the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) (the colonial portion being called the French and Indian War) and the ongoing costs of stationing British troops in the colonies, which amounted to about 400,000 pounds annually. There was also a

feeling among many British leaders that the colonists needed to be brought into line to comply more fully with Parliamentary mandates.

## Townshend Acts

Accordingly, between June 15-29, 1767, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Charles Townshend, proposed, and Parliament passed, five additional measures, generally called the “*Townshend Acts*,” that reignited colonial opposition to British rule. These measures, which were intended to raise revenue and ensure colonial compliance with British laws, were: (1) the *New York Restraining Act*, which suspended legislative actions by the New York Assembly until the colony complied with the *Quartering Act of 1765*, that required colonies where British troops were stationed to pay the cost of quartering such troops and certain related expenses; (2) the *Commissioners of Customs Act*, which created a powerful American Customs Board with members appointed by the British to decide American trade cases without juries and without appeal; (3) the *Indemnity Act*, which increased the cost of tea imported into the colonies by the British East India Tea Company, which had exclusive import rights; (4) the *Vice Admiralty Act*, which created special colonial courts, with judges appointed by the British, to prosecute violations of the revenue laws without juries and without appeal and with a rebuttable presumption that alleged violators were guilty and (5) the *Revenue Act*, which imposed taxes on lead, glass, tea and various goods imported from Britain that were regularly used by colonists and legally available only from British sources and also increased British officials’ powers of search and seizure of alleged contraband goods. (Interestingly, this revenue measure was only projected to raise 40,000 pounds, a paltry sum when compared to Britain’s costs of posting troops in the colonies.)



Lord Charles Townshend

## Massachusetts' Circular Letter & Virginia's Response

Not surprisingly, on learning of the *Townshend Acts*, colonists in Virginia and elsewhere recognized that their underlying political differences with Britain were ever present and that they must challenge Parliament's mandates or submit, which they were unwilling to do. The Massachusetts' House took the lead in February of 1768, petitioning the King in opposition to Townshend's statutes and sent a now famous Circular Letter drafted by Samuel Adams to other colonial legislatures urging coordination of their actions challenging these laws.<sup>1</sup> Tensions and protests increased in Massachusetts and its Royal Governor dissolved the legislature after it overwhelmingly refused to revoke the letter as demanded by the British. This further angered activists who felt that Britain was thereby denying their right to assemble and petition for redress of grievances. By October of 1768, British troops were landed in Boston to quell colonial protests. Boston and Massachusetts' officials refused to pay for quartering the troops. Massachusetts' colonists also re-instituted earlier tactics by agreeing to boycott British goods, and similar agreements followed in New York and, in early 1769, in Philadelphia. These events were widely reported throughout the colonies in newspapers and the extensive private correspondence among colonial leaders. In addition, John Dickinson's famous *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767-1768) set forth a clear statement of colonists' rights easily understandable by the common man. These letters were reprinted throughout the colonies, including Virginia, and were profoundly influential in shaping public opinion.



*Dickinson's Letters*

<sup>1</sup> See text of the Circular Letter on page 27

Virginia's House of Burgesses responded strongly in support of Massachusetts' Circular Letter after receiving it in April of 1768, sending petitions regarding colonial rights to the King and both houses of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> Then, as tensions increased in Massachusetts after troops were landed in Boston and nonimportation measures were being adopted there and other northern colonies, the Virginians took further action. On May 16, 1769, the Burgesses passed, with support from Essex County's representatives, four resolutions reiterating the basic arguments as to colonists' constitutional rights that had been stated during the earlier Stamp Act protests.<sup>3</sup> Governor Botetourt then promptly dissolved the Assembly.

The former Burgesses quickly reassembled in an extra-legal session at Williamsburg's Raleigh Tavern, and George Washington presented the draft of a nonimportation association. He and George Mason had prepared it several weeks earlier drawing some ideas from the New York and Philadelphia nonimportation agreements. After minor changes, these Burgesses adopted this 1769 Virginia Association which listed a wide range of British goods for nonimportation.<sup>4</sup> Ninety-four of the 116 former burgesses signed the association agreement on May 18<sup>th</sup>, and several absent members added their names at a later time. Essex County's representative, William Roane, was among the initial signers.

At first, many Virginia colonists, particularly the Great Planters in the Tidewater, were supportive of the Virginia's 1769 Association, and a number were excited about both the political leverage against Parliament they anticipated from the association and the anticipated domestic economic benefits that should arise from its expected tendency to foster diversification of the colony's economy. Unlike

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<sup>2</sup>These petitions can be found at: <http://research.history.org/pf/declaring/burgessesPetition.cfm> .

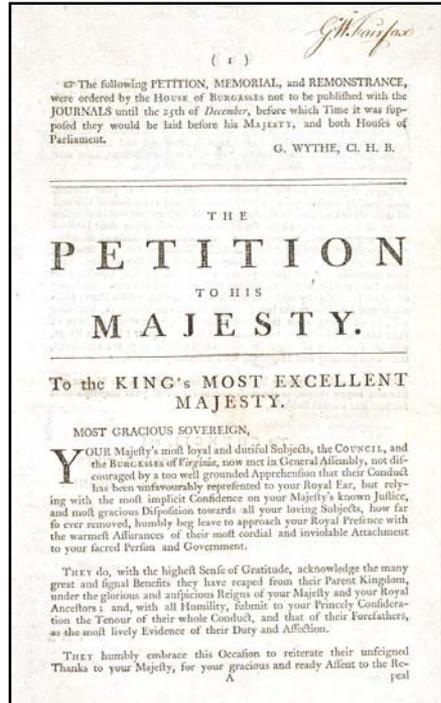
<sup>3</sup>See text of these Resolutions on page 29. It is important to note that in 1768, (and on until 1775, when colonial opinion changed radically and quickly), Virginia's legislators and their local constituents in Essex and other counties generally were not pushing for independence. However, while typically professing loyalty to the King, they were committed to stand up against Parliament to defend what they firmly believed were their fundamental political rights.

<sup>4</sup>See text of the 1769 Association on page 30.

Massachusetts and other northern colonies, Virginia had extremely limited manufacturing, and its economy was totally dependent on tobacco which was traded for British manufactured goods. Leading Virginia planters (e.g., George Washington, Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland, Landon Carter of Sabine Hall in Richmond County, and Carter's son-in-law Robert Beverley of Essex), who typically owned thousands of acres of land and raised tobacco for export to Great Britain through the toil of hundreds of slaves, had come to realize that most were themselves essentially economically enslaved by the one-crop plantation system and the closely linked British mercantile economy.

Comments by Robert Beverley illustrated the local hope and optimism that a trade boycott would soon lead to significant diversification and less reliance on Britain when he forecast that Virginians “shall very

*Virginia Burgesses' Petition*  
*shortly be able to supply ourselves with most of the useful Articles of Life, & those once established will be a perpetual Source of internal wealth to us.”*<sup>5</sup> Another Essex resident urged readers of the *Virginia Gazette* to help diversify the economy by complying with the Association. Francis Lightfoot Lee constructed a fulling mill across the Rappahannock on Nomini Creek in Westmoreland County to encourage local wool production and cloth manufacturing.



<sup>5</sup> It also should be noted that many wealthy planters like George Washington recognized that Virginia's leading gentry often engaged in many unnecessary extravagances that greatly increased their debts to British merchants and helped perpetuate British control of the colony's economy. They hoped that by encouraging thrift and local manufacturing and crop diversification Virginia's planters would eventually be freed from this trade bondage.

Unfortunately, breaking out of the tobacco-based economy proved exceedingly difficult, and it turned out that it would be many years, well after the Revolution, before significant diversification and manufacturing occurred in Virginia.

Although the Great Planters and many citizens in Essex and the Tidewater generally observed the 1769 Association, which was voluntary and lacked provisions to coerce compliance, many merchants and other residents did not join or abide by it. By the close of the year, it was clear in Virginia and in Britain that the colony's nonimportation agreement was not effective. The volume and worth of British imports here actually significantly increased.

While Virginia's 1769 Nonimportation Association was of little effect, overall colonial protests helped facilitate action by Parliament in early 1770, to repeal the Townshend duties, except the one on tea which Lord North, the new Prime Minister, argued should be kept to assert "*the right of taxing the Americans.*" Colonists were not satisfied with the partial repeal and protest efforts continued and intensified.

The Virginia House of Burgesses convened in late May of 1770. A revised nonimportation draft by George Mason and Richard Henry Lee was considered by the Burgesses and leading Virginia merchants who were in Williamsburg for the Assembly's session. This new proposal aimed to bring in more merchants and also to ensure compliance by creating five-member county committees with power to inspect all imported cargoes and merchants' correspondence and records. Merchants who did not comply were to be identified and deemed an enemy of the country, and associators were to cease all dealings with them.

This new association was approved on June 22, 1770, with 165 people, including Burgesses and a large group of leading merchants, signing the agreement.<sup>6</sup> Essex Merchants Archibald Ritchie and Archibald McCall, who had initially infuriated local residents in supporting the Stamp Act a decade earlier, were among the merchants who now joined the 1770 Association. Essex Burgesses William Roane and James Edmondson also signed, as did Essex merchant/planter/politician Meriwether Smith.

Essex is known to have been more vigorous than many counties in enforcing Virginia's 1770 nonimportation restrictions. For example, the Essex local enforcement committee, which included Thomas and

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<sup>6</sup> See text of the 1770 Nonimportation Association on page 33.

William Roane, James Edmondson and John Upshaw, forced merchants John and George Fowler to rescind an order sent to England on June 10<sup>th</sup> even though the Association's restrictions exempted orders placed prior to June 15<sup>th</sup>. However, overall the 1770 Virginia Association, like its predecessor of the prior year, soon proved to be ineffective.

As a practical matter, Virginia lacked the economic diversification and domestic manufacturing necessary to provide local goods to meet many citizens' critical basic needs. Many of the British merchants also disregarded nonimportation rules, and many Virginians, especially smaller farmers in more recently settled parts of the colony, readily bought British manufactured goods in British factors' stores. British imports in Virginia were even greater in 1770, than the prior year. A significant reason for the growth in imports was an unprecedented expansion at this time in British credit, and rising tobacco prices also encouraged Virginia colonists to import more goods. Support for nonimportation also diminished rapidly in northern colonies about this time, and Virginia's Association was largely dissolved in July of 1771.

During 1771-1772, simmering tensions with British rule remained, but there was a period of relative quiet between the colonies and the mother country. In Virginia, serious flooding damaged much of the tobacco crop in 1771, and this was followed in 1772, with falling tobacco prices and a severe crisis in the availability of British credit on which colonists here had become so dependent.

However, by 1773, political tensions with Britain were increasing. In Virginia, the House of Burgesses in March appointed a Standing Committee on Correspondence, as Massachusetts had done the prior November, to promote better organization and cooperation among the colonies. Within a year all but one of the other colonies had followed suit.

## Parliament's Continuing Disregard of Colonial Rights & Colonial Responses

Colonial concerns dramatically increased after Parliament in May passed the *Tea Act of 1773*. This statute was designed to bail out the economically troubled British East India Company by giving it a monopoly on tea sold in the colonies and retaining the existing three pence duty on tea. Many citizens in Virginia and its sister colonies viewed this as Parliament's continuing to do as it pleased without regard to colonists' constitutional rights. Many felt that if colonists did not

forcefully challenge this action promptly they would soon forfeit their right or ability to do so.

Once again, Massachusetts residents took the lead in “stirring the pot” with the famous “Boston Tea Party” on December 16, 1773. About 50 Bostonian patriots dressed “*in the Indian manner*” tossed 342 crates of tea valued at roughly 10,000 British pounds into the town’s harbor. Not surprisingly, this greatly angered British political leaders, and Parliament proceeded to pass a series of new laws, known by the British as the “*Coercive Acts*,” and by the Americans as the “*Intolerable Acts*,” intended to force the colonies into compliance with its mandates. The first and most infuriating to Americans was the *Boston Port Act* of March 30, 1774, which closed the port until reparations were made for the earlier Tea Party. On May 20, Parliament passed the *Administration of Justice Act*, allowing British appointed colonial governors to move trials to Britain or other colonies, and the *Massachusetts Government Act*, suspending the colony’s self-governmental powers such that the Crown appointed all government positions.<sup>7</sup>



*The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor, 1846 Lithograph by Nathaniel Currier*

<sup>7</sup> In addition, Parliament passed: the Quebec Act on October 7, 1774, ceding to Quebec lands settled and claimed by American colonists; the Second Quartering Act on June 2, 1774, relating to New York’s quartering of British troops; and the American Prohibitory Act on December 22, 1775, imposing a world-wide blockade on all American commerce.

## Virginia's Day of "Fasting, Humiliation, & Prayer" Resolution

Americans were outraged by Parliament's actions. After passage of the *Boston Port Act*, Virginia's Burgesses on May 24, 1774, passed, with the support of Essex' representatives James Edmondson and William Roane, a resolution calling for a day of "Fasting, Humiliation, & Prayer" by the Burgesses on June 1<sup>st</sup> in support of Boston.<sup>8</sup>

In his autobiography, Thomas Jefferson recalled that he and several others, including Francis Lightfoot Lee, Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry, "cooked up" the resolution on the prior evening "agreeing that we must boldly take an unequivocal stand in the line with Massachusetts" as they were "under conviction of the necessity of arousing our people from the lethargy into which they had fallen as to passing events." To do so they crafted the resolution drawing on a precedent of having such a fasting day that had been employed successfully many years earlier in English politics. Jefferson described the effect of June 1<sup>st</sup> Fasting measure, which was widely publicized, as "like a shock of electricity arousing every man & placing him erect and solidly on his centre."



Lord John Murray, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunsmore

Governor Dunmore, however, viewed the resolution as "a determined resolution to deny and oppose the Authority of Parliament," and two days later dissolved the Virginia Assembly, noting that "I have in my hand a Paper published by Order of your House, conceived in such Terms as reflect highly upon his Majesty and the Parliament

<sup>8</sup> See text of the 1774 Resolution on page 36.

*of Great Britain; which makes it necessary for me to dissolve you; and you are dissolved accordingly.”*

## Virginia’s 1774 Association & Call for a Virginia Convention on August 1, 1774

The former Burgesses then promptly reconvened in Williamsburg’s Raleigh Tavern to determine how to respond. On May 27, 1774, eighty-nine of the former burgesses, including William Roane and James Edmondson of Essex, signed a new association urging Virginians to oppose British actions aimed at “*reducing the inhabitants of British America to slavery.*”<sup>9</sup> Purportedly concerned over the impact of agreeing to stronger measures on British merchants and manufacturers, and uncertain as to how other colonies would respond to Boston’s plight, this association did not spell out a detailed commercial boycott program, but it did reaffirm the boycott on dutied tea and called for nonimportation of most East India Company products. It also included Richard Henry Lee’s proposal for an annual convention of representatives from all colonies.

Next, on May 29, former Burgesses’ Speaker Peyton Randolph, after receiving copies of recent resolutions from Boston, Philadelphia and Annapolis, called together Burgesses still remaining in Williamsburg, and on May 30, 1774, twenty-five of them met and unanimously agreed to support whatever was decided on by a congress of all colonies. The next day they sent all of the former Virginia Burgesses a letter summarizing their discussions, and invited them to a convention on August 1<sup>st</sup> in Williamsburg. Burgesses were instructed to determine in the interim “*the Sense of their respective Counties.*”<sup>10</sup>

This direction for determining the public will, together with the call for the day of public fasting on June 1<sup>st</sup>, were very significant and savvy political moves as they ensured that the broader freeholder population, not just the Gentry and political leaders, would be engaged and invested in opposition to the *Boston Port Act* and other oppressive British measures.

As directed, at least 41 of Virginia’s counties held public meetings in June and July of 1774, to elect and instruct representatives to attend the August 1<sup>st</sup> Convention in Williamsburg. Some counties promptly

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<sup>9</sup> See text of this 1774 Association on page 37.

<sup>10</sup> See text of this letter on page 38.

agreed to nonimportation associations, while others determined to wait to see what the Convention decided.

## The Essex Resolutions of Essex County Citizen's Meeting & July 9, 1774 Resolutions

Proudly, our Essex forefathers came forth with clear, sweeping and forceful resolutions after Essex Burgesses William Roane and James Edmonson called a meeting “*of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the County of Essex*” at the Courthouse on Saturday, July 9, 1774 “*seriously to consider the present dangers which threaten ruin to American Liberty.*” John Upshaw, a former Essex Burgess, Sheriff and Justice and Signer of the earlier Leedstown Stamp Act Resolutions, was selected Moderator of the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and a gentleman, William Young, served as Clerk.

Leading Essex planter Robert Beverley came to the meeting opposed to strong confrontational action like a tough import-export ban. Beverley instead proposed sending a group of large planters to England to offer to pay the King a contribution annually in lieu of a tax. He argued this would fulfill Britain's revenue needs and allow for good relations to resume with the colonies. His approach, however, was out of touch with the broader community's mood which favored stronger, more confrontational actions, and accordingly, it was rejected. Instead, Essex citizens adopted resolutions calling for a tough, comprehensive trade boycott proposal and other measures that showed they were well informed and supportive of forceful colonial actions to defend their rights.

Undoubtedly, one or more of those involved had devoted considerable time and effort before the meeting to develop a draft for the public assembly to consider because the *Essex Resolutions* are so well written - they are, for example, considerably broader and more impressive in this author's opinion than Westmoreland County's, reportedly drafted by Richard Henry Lee, which that jurisdiction adopted several weeks earlier.<sup>11</sup>

Among other things, in addition to setting forth colonists' basic rights regarding taxation and to be tried by juries of their local peers, the *Essex July 9, 1774 Resolutions* criticized the East India Company's

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<sup>11</sup> See text of the Westmoreland Resolutions on page 39.

actions, noting it deserved the loss it had sustained in the Boston Tea Party. The resolves stated that Massachusetts was “*suffering in the common cause of North America for the just opposition*” to Britain’s oppressive actions, and noted that “*it is indispensably necessary that all the colonies should unite firmly in defense of our common rights.*” Unlike a number of other counties, the Essex Resolutions endorsed a tough agreement “*firmly entered into and religiously complied with*” to prohibit not only East India products, but also all exports to and imports from Britain, the West Indies and elsewhere apart from other North American colonies. To prevent price gouging abuses by merchants, the resolves called on all colonial merchants to not raise prices of goods already on hand. In addition, the resolves called for closing civil courts, thereby preventing British merchants from pursuing Virginia debtors, until the export ban was ended. However, one resolution specifically expressed the local citizens’ sensitivity to the impact of boycotting trade on British merchants and manufacturers and said that “*nothing but the desire of preserving our liberties could induce us to adopt a measure big with such melancholy consequences.*” James Edmondson and William Roane, who had represented Essex in the now dissolved legislature, were also appointed to represent the county at the August 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Convention, which would select representatives for the subsequent General Congress of all colonies that became the First Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia on September 5 – October 26, 1774.

To properly appreciate the significance of the 1774 Essex Resolutions, it is necessary to study the actual text, which provides an impressive comprehensive and clear statement of our forefathers’ concerns and positions. The provisions’ wording leaves no doubt that our ancestors were aware of and strongly committed, “*at the expense of [their] lives and fortunes,*” to the most forward political thinking held by leading patriots in Virginia and its sister colonies. The text of the Resolutions is as follows:

## Essex Resolutions of July 9, 1774

*At a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of Essex County, Virginia, at the courthouse thereof, on Saturday, the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 on 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 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 parts 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 of this continent shall advance the goods now on hand higher than they are at the 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 ports, 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 Edmonson, 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 that 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*



Essex County 1729 Colonial  
Courthouse

*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 in 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*

The Essex Committee to gather and ship provisions to Boston was quite successful and raised over a thousand bushels of corn for Bostonians. When shipping the corn, Beverly, Lee, Upshaw and Ritchie wrote a supportive transmittal letter to John Hancock and asked for an update on the political situation in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the ship loaded with the corn was blown totally off course and ended up in the Leeward Islands east of Puerto Rico. Luckily however, a merchant there purchased the corn and forwarded the proceeds on to Boston where it was finally received in March of 1775, only weeks before the start of the war. Essex leaders received a reply letter dated March 14, 1775 expressing appreciation on behalf of the city from Samuel Adams, one of America's greatest patriots.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See text of this correspondence on page 45.

## First Virginia Revolutionary Convention of August 1 – 6, 1774

As directed, on August 1, 1774, Essex' Burgesses Edmondson and Roane attended the Virginia Convention,<sup>13</sup> which selected seven of Virginia's most prominent leaders,<sup>14</sup> albeit that none were from Essex, to represent the colony in the First Continental Congress that began September 5, 1775. The Convention also adopted a strong new association that, among other things, provided for nonimportation of British goods, nonexportation of tobacco and other products, nonimportation of slaves, merchants' not inflating prices to take advantage of shortages, and citizens' contributing to the relief of Boston.<sup>15</sup> The *Essex July 9<sup>th</sup> Resolutions* comported well with what the Convention adopted.

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*This brings us to the cusp of the American Revolution, which began in April of 1775, and to the stopping point for the current article. As has been shown, especially by the July 9, 1774 Essex Resolutions, county residents were quite aware, engaged and strongly supportive of standing up to Britain in defense of colonists' political rights. Subsequent articles in this series will describe how Essex freeholders generally shifted from rebellion against British policies to supporting outright independence and became true patriots during the American Revolution, many actively joining colonial military forces, and a significant number sacrificing their lives in the cause of liberty.*

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<sup>13</sup> This proved to be the first of five Revolutionary Conventions and began the shift away from British rule to full self-rule of the colony, which was formally achieved with adoption of the First Constitution of Virginia in the Fifth Convention on June 29, 1776, the same day Patrick Henry was inaugurated as Virginia's first Governor.

<sup>14</sup> George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Edmund Pendleton, Benjamin Harrison, Richard Bland, and Peyton Randolph, who was promptly elected President of the Congress.

<sup>15</sup> See text of these resolutions at page 41.

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Wright Andrews

**Article Sources:** “A Planters’ Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia,” by Bruce A. Ragsdale (1996); “Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence, Volume I, Forming Thunderclouds and the First Convention, 1763-1774, A Documentary Record,” Ed. by Robert L. Scribner; “Settlers, Southerners, Americans: The History of Essex County, Va.,” by James B. Slaughter; “The American Revolution: A compendium of Terms and Topics,” by Paul A. Chase (2017); “The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789,” by Robert Middlekauff (2005).

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## Massachusetts Circular Letter of February 11, 1768

SIR,

The House of Representatives of this province, have taken into their serious consideration, the great difficulties that must accrue to themselves and their constituents, by the operation of several acts of Parliament, imposing duties and taxes on the American colonies.

As it is a subject in which every colony is deeply interested, they have no reason to doubt but your House is deeply impressed with its importance, and that such constitutional measures will be come into, as are proper. It seems to be necessary, that all possible care should be taken, that the representatives of the several assemblies, upon so delicate a point, should harmonize with each other. The House, therefore, hope that this letter will be candidly considered in no other light there as expressing a disposition freely to communicate their mind to a sister colony upon a common concern, in the same manner as they would be glad to receive the sentiments of your or any other House of Assembly on the continent.

The House have humbly represented to the ministry, their own sentiments, that his Majesty's high court of Parliament is the supreme legislative power over the whole empire; that in all free states the constitution is fixed, and as the

supreme legislative derives its power and authority from the constitution, it cannot overleap the bounds of it, without destroying its own foundation; that the constitution ascertains and limits both sovereignty and allegiance, and, therefore, his Majesty's American subjects, who acknowledge themselves bound by the ties of allegiance, have an equitable claim to the full enjoyment of the fundamental rules of the British constitution; that it is an essential, unalterable right, in nature, engrafted into the British constitution, as a fundamental law, and ever held sacred and irrevocable by the subjects within the realm, that what a man has honestly acquired is absolutely his own, which he may freely give, but cannot be taken from him without his consent; that the American subjects may, therefore, exclusive of any consideration of charter rights, with a decent firmness, adapted to the character of free men and subjects, assert this natural and constitutional right.

It is, moreover, their humble opinion, which they express with the greatest deference to the wisdom of the Parliament, that the acts made there, imposing duties on the people of this province, with the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue, are infringements of their natural and constitutional rights; because, as they are not represented in the British Parliament, his Majesty's Commons in Britain, by those acts, grant their property without their consent. This House further are of opinion, that their constituents, considering their local circumstances, cannot, by any possibility, be represented in the Parliament; and that it will forever be impracticable, that they should be equally represented there, and consequently, not at all; being separated by an ocean of a thousand leagues. That his Majesty's royal predecessors, for this reason, were graciously pleased to form a subordinate legislature here, that their subjects might enjoy the unalienable right of a representation: also, that considering the utter impracticability of their ever being fully and equally represented in Parliament, and the great expense that must unavoidably attend even a partial representation there, this House thinks that a taxation of their constituents, even without their consent, grievous as it is, would be preferable to any representation that could be admitted for them there.

Upon these principles, and also considering that were the right in Parliament ever so clear, yet, for obvious reasons, it would be beyond the rules of equity that their constituents should be taxed, on the manufactures of Great Britain here, in addition to the duties they pay for them in England, and other advantages arising to Great Britain, from the acts of trade, this House have preferred a humble, dutiful, and loyal petition, to our most gracious sovereign, and made such representations to his Majesty's ministers, as they apprehended would tend to obtain redress.

They have also submitted to consideration, whether any people can be said to enjoy any degree of freedom, if the Crown, in addition to its undoubted authority of constituting a Governor, should appoint him such a stipend as it may judge proper, without the consent of the people, and at their expense; and whether, while the judges of the land, and other civil officers, hold not their

commissions during good behaviour, their having salaries appointed for them by the Crown, independent of the people, hath not a tendency to subvert the principles of equity, and endanger the happiness and security of the subject. In addition to these measures, the House have written a letter to their agent, which he is directed to lay before the ministry; wherein they take notice of the hardships of the act for preventing mutiny and desertion, which requires the Governor and Council to provide enumerated articles for the King's marching troops, and the people to pay the expenses; and also, the commission of the gentlemen appointed commissioners of the customs, to reside in America, which authorizes them to make as many appointments as they think fit, and to pay the appointees what sum they please, for whose mal-conduct they are not accountable; from whence it may happen, that officers of the Crown may be multiplied to such a degree as to become dangerous to the liberty of the people, by virtue of a commission, which does not appear to this House to derive any such advantages to trade as many have supposed.

These are the sentiments and proceedings of this House; and as they have too much reason to believe that the enemies of the colonies have represented them to his Majesty's ministers, and to the Parliament, as factious, disloyal, and having a disposition to make themselves independent of the mother country, they have taken occasion, in the most humble terms, to assure his Majesty, and his ministers, that, with regard to the people of this province, and, as they doubt not, of all the colonies, the charge is unjust. The House is fully satisfied, that your Assembly is too generous and liberal in sentiment, to believe that this letter proceeds from an ambition of taking the lead, or dictating to the other assemblies. They freely submit their opinions to the judgment of others; and shall take it kind in your House to point out to them anything further, that may be thought necessary.

This House cannot conclude, without expressing their firm confidence in the King, our common head and father; that the united and dutiful supplications of his distressed American subjects, will meet with his royal and favorable acceptance.

## Virginia Resolutions of May 16, 1769

Resolved, *nem. com.*, that the sole right of imposing taxes on the inhabitants of this his Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia is now, and ever has been, legally and constitutionally vested in the House of Burgesses, lawfully convened according to the ancient and established practice, with the consent of the Council, and of his Majesty the king of Great Britain, or his governor for the time being.

Resolved, that it is the undoubted privilege of the inhabitants of this colony to petition their sovereign for redress of grievances; and that it is lawful and expedient to procure the concurrence of his Majesty's other colonies in dutiful

addresses, praying the royal interposition in favour of the violated rights of America.

Resolved, that all trials for treason, misprision of treason, or for any felony or crime whatsoever committed and done in this his Majesty's said colony and dominion by any person or persons residing therein, ought of right to be had and conducted in and before his Majesty's courts held within the said colony, according to the fixed and known course of proceeding; and that the seizing any person or persons residing in this colony, suspected of any crime whatsoever committed therein, and sending such person or persons to places beyond the sea to be tried, is highly derogatory of the rights of British subjects, as thereby the inestimable privilege of being tried by a jury from the vicinage, as well as the liberty of summoning and producing witnesses on such trial, will be taken away from the party accused.

Resolved, that an humble, dutiful, and loyal address be presented to his Majesty to assure him of our inviolable attachment to his sacred person and government, and to beseech his royal interposition, as the father of all his people, however remote from the seat of his empire, to quiet the minds of his loyal subjects of this colony, and to avert from them those dangers and miseries which will ensue from the seizing and carrying beyond the sea any persons residing in America suspected of any crime whatsoever, to be tried in any other manner than by the ancient and long established course of proceeding.

## Virginia Nonimportation Association of May 18, 1769

WE his Majesty's most dutiful Subjects, the late Representatives of all the Freeholders of the Colony of *Virginia*, avowing our inviolable and unshaken Fidelity and Loyalty to our most gracious Sovereign, our Affection for all our Fellow Subjects of *Great-Britain*; protesting against every Act or Thing, which may have the most distant Tendency to interrupt, or in any wise disturb his Majesty's Peace, and the good Order of his Government in this Colony, which we are resolved, at the Risque of our Lives and Fortune, to maintain and defend; but, at the same Time, being deeply affected with the Grievances and Distresses, with which his Majesty's *American* Subjects are oppressed, and dreading the Evils which threaten the Ruin of ourselves and our Posterity, by reducing us from a free and happy People to a wretched and miserable State of Slavery; and having taken into our most serious Consideration the present State of the Trade of this Colony, and of the *American* Commerce in general, observe with Anxiety, that the Debt due to *Great-Britain* for Goods imported from thence is very great, and that the Means of paying this Debt, in the present Situation of Affairs. are likely to become more and more

precarious; that the Difficulties, under which we now labour, are owing to the Restrictions, Prohibitions, and ill advised Regulations, in several late Acts of Parliament of *Great-Britain*, in particular, that the late unconstitutional Act, imposing Duties on Tea, Paper, Glass, &c. for the sole Purpose of raising a Revenue in *America*, is injurious to Property, and destructive to Liberty, hath a necessary Tendency to prevent the Payment of the Debt due from this Colony to *Great-Britain*, and is, of Consequence, ruinous to Trade; that, notwithstanding the many earnest Applications already made, there is little Reason to expect a Redress of those Grievances; Therefore, in Justice to ourselves and our Posterity, as well as to the Traders of *Great-Britain* concerned in the *American* Commerce, we, the Subscribers, have voluntarily and unanimously entered into the following Resolutions, in Hopes that our Example will induce the good People of this Colony to be frugal in the Use and Consumption of *British* Manufactures, and that the Merchants and Manufacturers of *Great-Britain* may, from Motives of Interest, Friendship, and Justice, be engaged to exert themselves to obtain for us a Redress of those Grievances, under which the Trade and Inhabitants of *America* at present labour; We do therefore most earnestly recommend this our Association to the serious Attention of all Gentlemen, Merchants, Traders, and other Inhabitants of this Colony, in Hopes, that they will very readily and cordially accede thereto.

First, It is UNANIMOUSLY agreed on and resolved this 18th Day of *May*, 1769, that the Subscribers, as well by their own Example, as all other legal Ways and Means in their Power, will promote and encourage Industry and Frugality, and discourage all Manner of Luxury and Extravagance.

Secondly, That they will not at any Time hereafter, directly or indirectly import, or cause to be imported, any Manner of Goods, Merchandize, or Manufactures, which are, or shall hereafter be taxed by Act of Parliament, for the Purpose of raising a Revenue in *America* (except Paper, not exceeding Eight Shillings Sterling per Ream, and except such Articles only, as Orders have been already sent for) nor purchase any such after the First Day of *September* next, of any Person whatsoever, but that they will always consider such Taxation, in every Respect, as an absolute Prohibition, and in all future Orders, direct their Correspondents to ship them no Goods whatever, taxed as aforesaid, except as is above excepted.

Thirdly, That the Subscribers will not hereafter, directly or indirectly, import or cause to be imported from *Great-Britain*, or any Part of *Europe* (except such Articles of the Produce or Manufacture of *Ireland* as may be immediately and legally brought from thence, and except also all such Goods as Orders have been already sent for) any of the Goods herein after enumerated, viz. Spirits, Wine, Cyder, Perry, Beer, Ale, Malt, Barley, Pease, Beef, Pork, Fish, Butter, Cheese, Tallow, Candles, Oil, Fruit, Sugar, Pickles, Confectionary, Pewter, Hoes, Axes, Watches, Clocks, Tables, Chairs, Looking

Glasses, Carriages, Joiner's and Cabinet Work of all Sorts, Upholstery of all Sorts, Trinkets and Jewellery, Plate and Gold, and Silversmith's Work of all Sorts, Ribbon and Millinery of all Sorts, Lace of all Sorts, *India* Goods of all Sorts, except Spices, Silks of all Sorts, except Sewing Silk, Cambrick, Lawn, Muslin, Gauze, except Boulting Cloths, Callico or Cotton Stuffs of more than Two Shillings per Yard, Linens of more than Two Shillings per Yard, Woollens, Worsted Stuffs of all Sorts of more than One Shilling and Six Pence per Yard, Broad Cloths of all Kinds at more than Eight Shillings per Yard, Narrow Cloths of all Kinds at more than Three Shillings per Yard, Hats, Stockings (Plaid and *Irish* Hose excepted) Shoes and Boots, Saddles, and all Manufactures of Leather and Skins of all Kinds, until the late Acts of Parliament imposing Duties on Tea, Paper, Glass, &c. for the Purpose of raising a Revenue in *America*, are repealed, and that they will not, after the First of *September* next, purchase any of the above enumerated Goods of any Person whatsoever, unless the above mentioned Acts of Parliament are repealed.

Fourthly, That in all Orders, which any of the Subscribers may hereafter send to *Great-Britain*, they shall, and will expressly direct their Correspondents not to ship them any of the before enumerated Goods, until the before mentioned Acts of Parliament are repealed; and if any Goods are shipped to them contrary to the Tenor of this Agreement, they will refuse to take the same, or make themselves chargeable therewith.

Fifthly, That they will not import any Slaves, or purchase any imported, after the First Day of *November* next, until the said Acts of Parliament are repealed.

Sixthly, That they will not import any Wines of any Kind whatever, or purchase the same from any Person whatever, after the First Day of *September* next, except such Wines as are already ordered, until the Acts of Parliament imposing Duties thereon are repealed.

Seventhly, For the better Preservation of the Breed of Sheep, That they will not kill, or suffer to be killed, any Lambs, that shall be yeaned before the First Day of *May*, in any Year, nor dispose of such to any Butcher or other Person, whom they may have Reason to expect, intends to kill the same.

Eighthly and Lastly, That these Resolves shall be binding on all and each of the Subscribers, who do hereby each and every Person for himself, upon his Word and Honour, agree that he will strictly and firmly adhere to and abide by every Article in this Agreement, from the Time of his signing the same, for and during the Continuance of the before mentioned Acts of Parliament, or until a general Meeting of the Subscribers, after one Month's public Notice, shall determine otherwise, the second Article of this Agreement still and for ever continuing in full Power and Force.

# Virginia Nonimportation Association of June 22, 1770

*The ASSOCIATION entered into last Friday, the 22d instant, by the Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, and the Body of Merchants, assembled in this city.*

WE his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects of *Virginia*, declaring our inviolable and unshaken fidelity and attachment to our gracious sovereign, our affection for all our fellow subjects of *Great Britain*, and our firm determination to support, at the hazard of our lives and fortunes, the laws, the peace, and good order of government in this colony; but at the same time affected with great and just apprehensions of the fatal consequences certainly to follow from the arbitrary imposition of taxes on the people of *America*, for the purpose of raising a revenue from them, without the consent of their representatives; and as we consider it to be the indispensable duty of every virtuous member of society to prevent the ruin, and promote the happiness, of his country, by every lawful means, although in the prosecution of such a laudable and necessary design some unhappy consequences may be derived to many innocent fellow subjects, whom we wish not to injure, and who we hope will impute our conduct to the real necessity of our affairs: Influenced by these reasons, we do most earnestly recommend this our association to the serious attention of all Gentlemen merchants, traders, and other inhabitants of this colony, not doubting but they will readily and cordially accede thereto. And at the same time we, and every of us, do most solemnly oblige ourselves, upon our word and honour, to promote the welfare and commercial interests of all those truly worthy merchants, traders, and others, inhabitants of this colony, who shall hereafter conform to the spirit of this association; but that we will upon all occasions, and at all times hereafter, avoid purchasing any commodity or article of goods whatsoever from any importer or seller of *British* merchandise or *European* goods, whom we may know or believe, in violation of the essential interests of this colony, to have preferred their own private emolument, by importing or selling articles prohibited by this association, to the destruction of the dearest rights of the people of this colony. And for the more effectual discovery of such defaulters, it is resolved,

That a committee of five be chosen in every county, by the majority of associators in each county, who, or any three of them, are hereby authorized to publish the names of such signers of the association as shall violate their agreement; and when there shall be an importation of goods into any county, such committee, or any three of them, are empowered to convene themselves, and in a civil manner apply to the merchant or importers concerned and desire to see the invoices and papers respecting such importation, and if they find any goods therein contrary to the association to let the importers know that it is the

opinion and request of the county that such goods shall not be opened or stored, but reshipped to the place from whence they came: And in case of refusal, without any manner of violence, inform them of the consequences, and proceed to publish an account of their conduct.

Secondly. That we the subscribers, as well by our own example as all other legal ways and means in our power, will promote and encourage industry and frugality, and discourage all manner of luxury and extravagance.

Thirdly. That we will not hereafter, directly or indirectly, import, or cause to be imported, from *Great Britain*, any of the goods hereafter enumerated, either for sale or for our own use; to wit, spirits, cider, sherry, beer, ale, porter, malt, pease, beef, fish, butter, cheese, tallow, candles, fruit, pickles, confectionary, chairs, tables, looking glasses, carriages, joiners work, and cabinet work of all sorts, riband, *India* goods of all sorts (except spices) calico of more than 3s. sterling per yard, upholstery (by which is meant paper hangings, beds ready made, furniture for beds, and carpetting) watches, clocks, silversmiths work of all sorts, silks of all sorts (except womens bonnets and hats, sewing silk, and netting silk) cotton stuffs of more than 3s. sterling per yard, linens of more than 2s. sterling per yard (except *Irish* linens) gauze, lawns, cambrick of more than 6s. sterling per yard, woollen and worsted stuffs of all sorts of more than 2s. sterling per yard, broadcloths of more than 8s. sterling per yard, narrow cloths of all kinds of more than 4s. sterling per yard, not less than 7–8ths yard wide, hats of greater value than 10s. sterling, stockings of more than 36s. sterling per dozen, shoes of more than 5s. sterling per pair, boots, saddles, mens exceeding 25s. and womens exceeding 40s. sterling, exclusive of bridles, which are allowed, portmanteaus, saddle bags, and all other manufactured leather, neither oil or painters colours, if both, or either of them, be subject to any duty after the 1st of *December* next. And that we will not import, or cause to be imported, any horses, nor purchase those which may be imported by others after the 1st of *November* next.

Fourthly. That we will not import or bring into the colony, or cause to be imported or brought into the colony, either by sea or land, any slaves, or make sale of any upon commission, or purchase any slave or slaves that may be imported by others after the 1st day of *November* next, unless the same have been twelve months upon the continent.

Fifthly. That we will not import any wines, on which a duty is laid by act of Parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue in *America*, or purchase such as may be imported by others, after the 1st day of *September* next.

Sixthly. That no wine be imported by any of the subscribers, or other person, from any of the colonies on this continent, or any other place, from the time of signing this association, contrary to the terms thereof.

Seventhly. That all such goods as may or shall be imported into this colony, in consequence of their having been rejected by the association

committees in any of our sister colonies, shall not be purchased by any associator; but that we will exert every lawful means in our power absolutely to prevent the sale of all such goods, and to cause the same to be exported as quickly as possible.

Eighthly. That we will not receive from *Great Britain*, or make sale of, upon commission, any of the articles above excepted to, after the first day of *September* next, nor any of those articles which may have been really and *bona fide* ordered by us, after the 25th of *December* next.

Ninthly. That we will not receive into our custody, make sale of, or become chargeable with, any of the articles aforementioned, that may be ordered after the 15th of *June* instant, nor give orders for any from this time; and that in all orders which any of us may hereafter send to *Great Britain* we will expressly direct and request our correspondents not to ship us any of the articles before excepted, and if any such goods are shipped contrary to the tenour of this agreement we will refuse to take the same, or make ourselves chargeable therewith.

*Provided nevertheless*, that such goods as are already on hand, or may be imported according to the true intent and meaning of this association, may be continued for sale.

Tenthly. That a committee of merchants, to be named by their own body, when called together by their chairman, be appointed to take under their consideration the general state of the trade in this colony, and report to the association, at their next meeting, a list of such other manufactures of *Great Britain*, or commodities of any kind whatever, now imported, as may reasonably, and with benefit to the colony, be excepted to.

Eleventhly. That we do hereby engage ourselves, by those most sacred ties of honour and love to our country, that we will not, either upon the goods which we have already upon hand or may hereafter import within the true meaning of this association, make any advance in price, with a view to profit by the restrictions hereby laid on the trade of this colony.

Twelfthly. That we will not at any time hereafter, directly or indirectly, import, or cause to be imported, or purchase from any person who shall import, any merchandise or manufactures exported from *Great Britain*, which are, or hereafter shall be, taxed by act of Parliament for the purposes of raising a revenue in America.

*Resolved*, that a meeting of the associators shall be called at the discretion of the Moderator, or at the request of twenty members of the association, signified to him in writing; and in case of the death of the present Moderator, the next person subscribing hereto be considered as Moderator, and act as such until the next general meeting.

Lastly. That these resolves shall be binding on all and each of the subscribers, who do hereby, each and every person for himself, agree that he will strictly and firmly adhere to and abide by every article of this association from the time of his signing the same until the act of Parliament which imposes a duty on tea, paper, glass, and painters colours, be totally repealed, or until a general meeting of one hundred associators, after one month's public notice, shall determine otherwise, the twelfth article of this agreement still and for ever continuing in force, until the contrary be declared by a general meeting of the members of this association.

*Signed in Williamsburg, this 22d of June 1770*

## Virginia Burgesses' Resolution of May 24, 1774 Designating June 1, 1774 as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer

THIS House being deeply impressed with Apprehension of the great Dangers to be derived to *British America*, from the hostile Invasion of the City of *Boston*, in our Sister Colony of *Massachusetts Bay*, whose Commerce and Harbour are on the 1st Day of *June* next to be stopped by an armed Force, deem it highly necessary that the said first Day of *June* be set apart by the Members of this House as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, devoutly to implore the divine Interposition for averting the heavy Calamity, which threatens Destruction to our civil Rights, and the Evils of civil War; to give us one Heart and one Mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper Means, every Injury to *American* Rights, and that the Minds of his Majesty and his Parliament may be inspired from above with Wisdom, Moderation, and Justice, to remove from the loyal People of *America* all Cause of Danger from a continued Pursuit of Measures pregnant with their Ruin.

*Ordered*, therefore, that the Members of this House do attend in their Places at the Hour of ten in the Forenoon, on the said 1st Day of *June* next, in Order to proceed with the Speaker and the Mace to the Church in this City for the Purposes aforesaid; and that the Reverend Mr. *Price* be appointed to read Prayers, and the Reverend Mr. *Gwatkin* to preach a Sermon suitable to the Occasion.

*Ordered*, that this Order be forthwith printed and published. *By the HOUSE of BURGESSES.*

GEORGE WYTHE, C. H. B.

## Association of Members of the Late House of Burgesses, May 27, 1774

### **AN ASSOCIATION, SIGNED BY 89 MEMBERS OF THE LATE HOUSE OF BURGESSES.**

WE his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the late representatives of the good people of this country, having been deprived by the sudden interposition of the executive part of this government from giving our countrymen the advice we wished to convey to them in a legislative capacity, find ourselves under the hard necessity of adopting this, the only method we have left, of pointing out to our countrymen such measures as in our opinion are best fitted to secure our dearest rights and liberty from destruction, by the heavy hand of power now lifted against North America: With much grief we find that our dutiful applications to Great Britain for security of our just, antient, and constitutional rights, have been not only disregarded, but that a determined system is formed and pressed for reducing the inhabitants of British America to slavery, by subjecting them to the payment of taxes, imposed without the consent of the people or their representatives; and that in pursuit of this system, we find an act of the British parliament, lately passed, for stopping the harbour and commerce of the town of Boston, in our sister colony of Massachusetts Bay, until the people there submit to the payment of such unconstitutional taxes, and which act most violently and arbitrarily deprives them of their property, in wharfs erected by private persons, at their own great and proper expence, which act is, in our opinion, a most dangerous attempt to destroy the constitutional liberty and rights of all North America. It is further our opinion, that as TEA, on its importation into America, is charged with a duty, imposed by parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue, without the consent of the people, it ought not to be used by any person who wishes well to the constitutional rights and liberty of British America. And whereas the India company have ungenerously attempted the ruin of America, by sending many ships loaded with tea into the colonies, thereby intending to fix a precedent in favour of arbitrary taxation, we deem it highly proper and do accordingly recommend it strongly to our countrymen, not to purchase or use any kind of East India commodity whatsoever, except saltpetre and spices, until the grievances of America are redressed. We are further clearly of opinion, that an attack, made on one of our sister colonies, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes, is an attack made on all British America, and threatens ruin to the rights of all, unless the united wisdom of the whole be applied. And for this purpose it is recommended to the committee of correspondence, that they communicate, with their several corresponding committees, on the expediency of appointing deputies from the several colonies of British America, to meet in general congress, at such place annually as shall be thought most convenient; there to deliberate on those

general measures which the united interests of America may from time to time require.

A tender regard for the interest of our fellow subjects, the merchants, and manufacturers of Great Britain, prevents us from going further at this time; most earnestly hoping, that the unconstitutional principle of taxing the colonies without their consent will not be persisted in, thereby to compel us against our will, to avoid all commercial intercourse with Britain. Wishing them and our people free and happy, we are their affectionate friends, the late representatives of Virginia.

## Letter From Peyton Randolph and Others to Members of the Late House of Burgesses

WILLIAMSBURG, *May 31, 1774*

GENTLEMEN,

LAST *Sunday* Morning several Letters were received from *Boston*, *Philadelphia*, and *Maryland*, on the most interesting and important Subject of *American Grievances*. The Inhabitants of *Boston* seem to be in a most piteous and melancholy Situation, and are doubtful whether they will be able to sustain the impending Blow without the Assistance and Co-operation of the other Colonies. By the Resolutions of their Town Meeting, it appears to be their Opinion that the most effectual Assistance which can be given them by their Sister Colonies will arise from a general Association against Exports and Imports, of every Kind, to or from *Great Britain*. Upon Receipt of this important Intelligence, the Moderator judged it most prudent immediately to convene as many of the late Representatives as could be got together, and yesterday, at a Meeting of twenty five of the late Members, we took the Business under our most serious Consideration. Most Gentlemen present seemed to think it absolutely necessary for us to enlarge our late Association, and that we ought to adopt the Scheme of Nonimportation to a very large Extent; but we were divided in our Opinions as to stopping our Exports. We could not, however, being so small a Proportion of the late Associates, presume to make any Alteration in the Terms of the general Association, and therefore resolved to invite all the Members of the late House of Burgesses to a general Meeting in this City on the first Day of *August* next. We fixed this distant Day in Hopes of accommodating the Meeting to every Gentleman's private Affairs, and that they might, in the mean Time, have an Opportunity of collecting the Sense of their respective Counties. The Inhabitants of this City were convened yesterday in the Afternoon, and most cheerfully acceded to the Measures we had adopted.

We flatter ourselves it is unnecessary to multiply Words to induce your Compliance with this Invitation, upon an Occasion which is, confessedly, of the most lasting Importance to all *America*. Things seem to be hurrying to an alarming Crisis, and demand the speedy, united Councils of all those who have a Regard for the common Cause. We are, Gentlemen, your most affectionate Friends, and obedient humble Servants.

## Westmoreland County June 22, 1774 Resolutions

At a respectable Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the County of *Westmorland*, assembled, on due notice, at the Court House of the said County, on *Wednesday*, the 22d of *June*, 1774.

The Reverend Mr. THOMAS SMITH, *Moderator*:

Several papers, containing the Proceedings of the late House of Burgesses of this Colony, and the subsequent determinations of the late Representatives after the House was dissolved, together with extracts of several Resolves of the Provinces of *Massachusetts Bay*, *Maryland*, &c', being read, the meeting proceeded seriously to consider the present dangerous and truly alarming crisis, when ruin is threatened to the ancient constitutional rights of *North America*, and came to the following Resolves:

1st. That to be taxed solely in our Provincial Assemblies, by Representatives freely chosen by the people, is a right that *British* subjects in *America* are entitled to, from natural justice, from the *English* Constitution, from Charters, and from a confirmation of these by usage, since the first establishment of these Colonies.

2d. That an endeavour to force submission from one Colony to the payment of taxes not so imposed, is a dangerous attack on the liberty and property of *British America*, and renders it indispensably necessary that all should firmly unite to resist the common danger.

3d. It is the opinion of this meeting, that the town of *Boston*, in our sister Colony of *Massachusetts Bay*, is now suffering in the common cause of *North America*, by having its harbour blocked up, its commerce destroyed, and the property of many of its inhabitants violently taken from them, until they submit to taxes not imposed by their consent; and therefore this meeting resolve:

4th. That the inhabitants of this county will most cordially and firmly join with the other counties in this Colony, and the other Colonies on this Continent, or the majority of them, after a short day, hereafter to be agreed on, to stop all exports to *Great Britain* and the *West Indies*, and all imports from thence, until, as well the Act of Parliament, entitled "An Act to discontinue, in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading, and shipping of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the

town and within the harbour of *Boston*, in the Province of *Massachusetts Bay*, in *North America*," as the several Acts laying duties on *America* for the purpose of raising a revenue, and all the Acts of the *British* Legislature made against our brothers of *Massachusetts Bay*, in consequence of their just opposition to the said Revenue Acts, are repealed; and it is the opinion of this meeting, that such a non-importing and non-exporting plan should be quickly entered upon, as well on the evident principle of self-preservation, as to relieve our suffering countrymen and fellow-subjects in *Boston*, and to restore between *Great Britain* and *America* that harmony so beneficial to the whole Empire, and so ardently desired by all *America*.

5th. It is the opinion of this meeting that the gentlemen of the law should not (as long as the nonexportation agreement subsists) bring any writ for the recovery of debt, or to push to a conclusion any such suit already brought, it being utterly inconsistent with a nonexportation plan that judgment should be given against those who are deprived of the means of paying.

6th. That so soon as the nonexportation agreement begins, we will, every man of us, keep our produce, whether tobacco, corn, wheat, or any thing else, unsold, on our own respective plantations, and not carry, or suffer them to be carried, to any public warehouse or landing place, except of grain; where the same be so done, an oath being first made that such grain is for the use of, or consumption of, this or any other Colony in *North America*, and not for exportation from the Continent whilst the said agreement subsists. And this is the more necessary to prevent a few designing persons from engrossing and buying up our tobacco, grain, &c, when they are low in value, in order to avail themselves of the very high price that those articles must bear when the ports are open, and foreign markets empty.

7th. This meeting do heartily concur with the late Representative body of this country, to disuse tea, and not purchase any other commodity of the *East Indies*, except saltpetre, until the grievances of *America* are redressed.

8th. We do most heartily concur in these preceding Resolves, and will, to the utmost of our power, take care that they are carried into execution; and that we will regard every man as infamous who now agree to, and shall hereafter make a breach of, all or any of them, subject however to such future alterations as shall be judged expedient, at a general meeting of Deputies from the several parts of this Colony, or a general Congress of all the Colonies.

9th. We do appoint *Richard Henry Lee*, and *Richard Lee*, Esquires, the late Representatives of this county, to attend the general meeting of Deputies from all the counties; and we desire that they do exert their best abilities to get these our earnest desires, for the security of public liberty, assented to.

10<sup>th</sup>. And as it may happen that the Assembly now called to meet on the 11<sup>th</sup> of *August*, may be prorogued to a future day, and many of the Deputies appointed to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> of *August*, trusting to the certainty of meeting in Assembly on the 11<sup>th</sup>, may fail to attend on the first, by which means decisive

injury may arise to the common cause of liberty, by the general sense of the country not being early known at this dangerous crisis of *American* freedom, we do, therefore, direct that our Deputies now chosen fall not to attend at *Williamsburg*, on the said 1<sup>st</sup> of *August*; and it is our earnest wish that the Deputies from other counties be directed to do the same for the reasons above assigned.

11<sup>th</sup>. That the Clerk do forthwith transmit the proceedings of this day to the press, and request the Printers to publish them without delay.

By order of the meeting,

JAMES DAVENPORT, *Clerk*.

## The Association of the First Virginia Convention, August 1-6, 1774

We, his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the delegates of the freeholders of Virginia, deputed to represent them at a general meeting in the city of Williamsburg, avowing our inviolable and unshaken fidelity and attachment to our most gracious sovereign, our regard and affection for all our friends and fellow subjects in Great Britain and elsewhere, protesting against every act or thing which may have the most distant tendency to interrupt, or in any wise disturb his Majesty's peace, and the good order of government, within this his ancient colony, which we are resolved to maintain and defend at the risk of our lives and fortunes, but at the same time affected with the deepest anxiety, and most alarming apprehensions of those grievances and distresses by which his Majesty's American subjects are oppressed, and having taken under our most serious deliberation the state of the whole continent, find that the present unhappy situation of our affairs is chiefly occasioned by certain ill-advised regulations, as well of our trade as internal policy, introduced by several unconstitutional Acts of the British Parliament, and at length attempted to be enforced by the hand of power; solely influenced by these important and weighty considerations, we think it an indispensable duty which we owe to our country, ourselves, and latest posterity, to guard against such dangerous and extensive mischiefs, by every just and proper means.

If, by the measures adopted, some unhappy consequences and inconveniences should be derived to our fellow subjects, whom we wish not to injure in the smallest degree, we hope and flatter ourselves, that they will impute them to their real cause the hard necessity to which we are driven.

That the good people of this colony may, on so trying an occasion, continue steadfastly directed to their most essential interests, in hopes that they will be influenced and stimulated by our example to the greatest industry, the strictest economy, and frugality, and the execution of every public virtue, persuaded that the merchants, manufacturers, and other inhabitants of Great Britain, and

above all, that the British Parliament will be convinced how much the true interest of that kingdom must depend on the restoration and continuance of that mutual friendship and cordiality which so happily subsisted between us, we have unanimously, and with one voice, entered into the following resolutions and association, which we do oblige ourselves, by those sacred ties of honour and love to our country, strictly to observe; and further declare before God and the world, that we will religiously adhere to and keep the same inviolate in every particular, until redress of all such American grievances as may be defined and settled at the general congress of delegates from the different colonies shall be fully obtained, or until this association shall be abrogated or altered by a general meeting of the deputies of this colony, to be convened, as is hereinafter directed. And we do with the greatest earnestness recommend this our association to all gentlemen, merchants, traders, and other inhabitants of this colony, hoping that they will cheerfully and cordially accede thereto.

1st. We do hereby resolve and declare that we will not, either directly or indirectly, after the first day of November next, import from Great Britain, any goods, wares, or merchandises whatever (medicines excepted), nor will we after that day, import any British manufactures, either from the West Indies or any other place, nor any article whatever, which we shall know or have reason to believe, was brought into such countries from Great Britain, nor will we purchase any such articles so imported of any person or persons whatsoever, except such as are now in the country, or such as may arrive on or before the said first day of November, in consequence of orders already given, and which cannot now be countermanded in time.

2dly. We will neither ourselves import nor purchase any slave or slaves, imported by any person, after the first day of November next, either from Africa, the West Indies, or any other place.

3dly. Considering the article of tea as the detestable instrument which laid the foundation of the present sufferings of our distressed friends in the town of Boston, we view it with horror, and therefore resolve that we will not from this day, either import tea of any kind whatever, nor will we use or suffer, even such of it as is now at hand, to be used in any of our families.

4thly. If the inhabitants of the town of Boston, or any other colony, should by violence or dire necessity, be compelled to pay the East India Company for destroying any tea which they have lately by their agents unjustly attempted to force into the colonies, we will not, directly or indirectly, import or purchase any British East India commodity whatever till the company, or some other person on their behalf, shall refund and fully restore to the owners all such sum or sums of money as may be so extorted.

5thly. We do resolve that unless American grievances be redressed before the 10th day of August, 1775, we will not after that day, directly or indirectly, export tobacco or any other article whatever to Great Britain; nor will we sell any such articles as we think can be exported to Great Britain with a prospect of gain, to any person or persons whatever, with a design of putting it into his or their power to export the same to Great Britain, either on our own, his or their account. And that this resolution may be the more effectually carried into execution, we do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of this colony to refrain from the cultivation of tobacco as much as conveniently may be, and in lieu thereof that they will, as we resolve to do, apply their attention and industry to the cultivation of all such articles as may form a proper basis for manufactures of all sorts, which we will endeavour to encourage throughout this colony to the utmost of our abilities.

6thly. We will endeavour to improve our breed of sheep and increase their number to the utmost extent, and to this end we will be as sparing as we conveniently can in killing of sheep, especially those of the most profitable kind, and if we should at any time be overstocked and can conveniently spare any, we will dispose of them to our neighbours, especially the poorer sort of people, upon moderate terms.

7thly. Resolved, that the merchants and others, venders of goods and merchandises within this colony, ought not to take advantage of the scarcity of goods that may be occasioned by this association, but that they ought to sell the same at the rates they have been accustomed to for twelve months past, and if they shall sell any such goods on higher terms, or shall in any manner, or by any device whatever, violate or depart from this resolution, we will not, and are of opinion that no inhabitant of this colony ought, at any time thereafter, to deal with any such persons, their factors, or agents, for any commodity whatever; and it is recommended to the deputies of the several counties that committees be chosen in each county, by such persons as accede to this association, to take effectual care that these resolves be properly observed, and for corresponding occasionally with the general committee of correspondence in the city of Williamsburg. Provided that, if exchange should rise, such advance may be made in the prices of goods as shall be approved by the committee of each county.

8thly. In order the better to distinguish such worthy merchants and traders who are well wishers to this colony from those who may attempt, through motives of self-interest, to obstruct our views, we do hereby resolve that we will not, after the first day of November next, deal with any merchant or trader who will not sign this association, nor until he hath obtained a certificate of his having done so from the county committee, or any three members thereof. And if any merchant, trader, or other persons shall import any goods or

merchandise after the first day of November, contrary to this association, we give it as our opinion that such goods and merchandise should be either forthwith reshipped, or delivered up to the county committee, to be stored at the risk of the importer, unless such importer shall give a proper assurance to the said committee that such goods or merchandises shall not be sold within this colony during the continuance of this association; and if such importer shall refuse to comply with one or the other of these terms, upon application and due caution given to him or her, by the said committee, or any three members thereof, such committee is required to publish the truth of the case in the gazettes, and in the county where he or she resides, and we will thereafter consider such person or persons as inimical to this country, and break off every connection and all dealings with them.

9thly. Resolved, that if any person or persons shall export tobacco, or any other commodity, to Great Britain, after the 10th day of August, 1775, contrary to this association, we shall hold ourselves obliged to consider such person or persons as inimical to the community, and as an approver of American grievances; and give it as our opinion that the public should be advertised of his conduct, as in the 8th article is desired.

10thly. Being fully persuaded that the united wisdom of the general congress may improve these our endeavours to preserve the rights and liberties in British America, we decline enlarging at present, but do hereby resolve that we will conform to, and strictly observe, all such alterations, or additions, assented to by the delegates for this colony, as they may judge it necessary to adopt, after the same shall be published and made known to us.

11thly. Resolved, that we think ourselves called upon by every principle of humanity and brotherly affection, to extend the utmost and speediest relief to our distressed fellow subjects in the town of Boston, and therefore most earnestly recommend it to all the inhabitants of this colony, to make such liberal contributions as they can afford; to be collected and remitted to Boston in such manner as may best answer so desirable a purpose.

12thly. and lastly. Resolved, that the moderator of this meeting, and, in case of his death, Robert Carter Nicholas, Esquire, be empowered on any future occasion that may in his opinion require it, to convene the several delegates of this colony at such time and place as he may judge proper; and in case of the death or absence of any delegate, it is recommended that another be chosen in his place.

## Letter From Essex County To John Hancock

Virginia, Essex County, Sept. 19, 1774.

John Hancock, Esq., or the Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston.

GENTLEMEN,

This serves to inform you that we have consigned to you, by the schooner Sally, James Perkins., master, one thousand and eighty-seven bushels of Indian corn, for the use of our suffering brethren in your Town, it being a part only of the contribution by the people in this County, for their relief. The remainder, amounting to four or five hundred bushels, shall come by the first opportunity. We can venture to assure you that the Virginians are warmly disposed to assist them, and hope for their steady and prudent perseverance in the common cause of our country, from whence only we can hope for a happy termination of our distresses. We pray God for an happy issue to our virtuous struggles, and we beg leave to assure you, that we have the most sincere regard for our Northward brethren, and are,

Gentlemen, your most obedient servants,

JOHN UPSHAW. ARCHIBALD RITCHIE. JNO. LEE. ROBERT BEVERLY.

P. S.—You will be pleased to communicate, by the return- of the vessel, the situation of public affairs in, your Province.

## Letter From Samuel Adams To Representatives of Essex County, VA

Boston, 14 March, 1775.

To Jno. Upshaw, Archibald Ritchie, Jno. Lee, and Robert Beverly, Esqrs.

GENTLEMEN,

I am to acquaint you, that immediately after the arrival of the unrighteous and cruel edict for shutting up our harbor, the inhabitants of this Town appointed a Committee to receive and distribute such donations as our friends were making, for the employment and relief of those who would become sufferers thereby. Your letter of the 19th of September last, directed to Jno. Hancock, Esq., or the Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston, was laid before the same Committee, in closing a bill of lading for one thousand and eighty-seven bushels of corn, being part of a very valuable contribution, shipped on board the schooner Sally, James Perkins, master, for the sufferers, from our respectable friends in Essex County, in Virginia. The schooner was by contrary winds driven to the island of St. Eustatia. Mr. Isaac Van Dam, a reputable merchant of that place, generously took the care of the corn, and, having made

sale of it, remitted the amount of the proceeds, (free of all expense,) being one hundred seventy-one pounds 8/, New York currency, in a bill of exchange, drawn on Mr. Isaac Moses, of that city, which we doubt not will be duly honored. The Committee very gratefully acknowledge their obligations to you, Gentlemen, for your trouble in transmitting this charitable donation, and they request that you would return their sincere thanks to the benevolent people of your County, for their great liberality towards the oppressed inhabitants of this devoted Town. This is one among many testimonies afforded to us, that the Virginians are warmly disposed to assist their injured brethren and fellow-subjects in this place. This consideration has hitherto encouraged our inhabitants to bear in dignities with patience, and having the continual approbation of all the Colonies, with that of their own minds, as being sufferers in the common cause of their country, I am fully persuaded of their resolution, by God's assistance, to persevere in the virtuous struggle, disdaining to purchase an exemption from suffering by a tame surrender of any part of the righteous claim of America. May Heaven give wisdom and fortitude to each of the Colonies, and succeed their [un] remitted efforts, in the establishment of public liberty on an immoveable foundation.

I am, in behalf of our Committee, Gentlemen, your affectionate friend and countryman,

S. ADAMS.

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Map of Colonial Essex County and surrounding area, circa 1775



# BARBOUR

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