

the
Outpost of Freedom

presents:

*A Continuation of an explanation
of the*

Committee of Safety
(Volume 2)

*as recorded in the history of America,
with,
documents demonstrative of
the growth of the Committees
during the formation of the Republic,
from their*

*early beginnings (circa 1765)
through the*

Declaration of Independence

*by Gary Hunt
January, 1996*

"Every man, and every body of men on earth, possess the right of self-government. They receive it with their being from the hand of nature. Individuals exercise it by their single will--collections of men by that of their majority, for the law of the majority is the natural law of every society of men."

Cabinet Opinion, July 15, 1790

"Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he then be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the form of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question."

March 4, 1801 Conciliatory Address

"Were I to assign to this term [Republican form of government] a precise and definite idea, I would say, purely and simply, it means a government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and not personally, according to the rules established by the majority; and that every other government is more or less republican, in proportion as it has in its composition more or less of this ingredient of the direct action of the citizens."

Letter to John Taylor, Monticello, May 28, 1816

"The further the departure from direct and constant control by the citizens, the less has the government of the ingredient of republicanism... "

Letter to John Taylor, Monticello, May 28, 1816

"There are two subjects, indeed, which I shall claim a right to further as long as I breathe, the public education, and the subdivision of counties into wards. I consider the continuance of republican government as absolutely hanging on these two hooks."

"My most earnest wish is to see the republican element of popular control pushed to the maximum of its practicable exercise. I shall then believe that our government may be pure and perpetual."

Letter to J. H. Tiffany, 1816)

"I have no fear but that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master. Could the contrary of this be proved, I should conclude either that there is no God or that he is a malevolent being."

Letter to David Hartley, Paris, July 2, 1787

"[W]hat country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that the people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms! The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its nature manure."

Letter to Col. William S. Smith, Paris, November 13, 1787

Malo periculosam libertatem quam quietam servitutem. (I prefer adventurous liberty to quiet servitude.)

Letter to James Madison, Paris, January 30, 1787

Introduction

For us to understand the significance of the Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety, it might be appropriate to understand, first, why have we not been taught about this important element of our heritage. Let us begin with the premise that our failure to have been taught more of these “assemblies of the people” is a result of a concerted effort on the part of an influential body to restrict, or even exclude, this momentous foundation to our “Republican Form” of government.

The “public education” system has been around since well before the United States of America was even a possibility, let alone a goal to be achieved. Public education had its roots in the desire of many of the early settlers in the New England area that their children become educated and able to conduct their lives as only educated people can. Taxes were laid on the catch from Chesapeake Bay, on all fishermen. These taxes were then divided, proportionate to the number of children, within the settlements of the colonies bordering the Bay, and the parents and community then applied these funds to provide the means for the education of the youth of the day. The word “public” was used to distinguish between the private and parochial schools that existed in larger communities, and back in Great Britain, and those which were open for all and sponsored by the people of the community. In fact, “public” meant that it was void from any influence except that of the parents and immediate community. The encouragement of this method of instruction was carried forward well into the nineteenth century, and a shallow remnant of that concept still exists.

The purpose of this article, however, is not to educate anyone as to the failure of the current “public (say government) school system,” rather to bring forward an obvious omission from the current program. This premise is left for you to contemplate as you begin to understand that the foundations of our Liberties rests so solidly in the concept of the Committees, that without them there would be no United States of America, today.

The Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety (most commonly known as Committees of Safety, particularly after July 4, 1776) were the extension of the people into a roll that was unheard of prior to the beginnings of true self-government, which had its roots in the colonies so distant from the mother country, Great Britain. From the early days in Jamestown and Plymouth Colony, the freemen of the community participated, to some degree, in the decision making process. Whether the issue is the use of community stores, means and methods of defense, or ecclesiastic law (ordinance), the contribution of the thoughts of all were a part of the process. Most often, the decisions were subject to the approval of a governor appointed or approved by the Crown, but participation in self-government had achieved a dimension greater than any other country in history.

As early as 1692, the Committee had become a means of effectively circumventing the authority of despotic governors. Governor Andros, of New England, was imprisoned by the Committee of Safety, and, when seeking revenge through the Crown, upon his return to England, found that even the King would not stand against the rulings of the Committee.

From this point on Committees played a roll as the effective “town meeting” forum that allowed organized growth, community improvement, defense and moral foundation to the outlying settlements which had no recourse for aid in their protection and growth. The current form of city government is a manifestation of these early principles of self-government, although they have deviated so much from the original concept that they bear only faint resemblance to them.

Note: Documents contained herein were transcribed from published accounts or from the actual documents. Where the actual document (or copy thereof) was available, efforts were made to set the document to appear similar to the original. In these cases, spelling has been maintained as it appeared.

The Concept of Self-Government

To better understand the concept behind the committees, in might first be necessary to understand some of the thought of the times. Many people, especially those working in higher circles for the American cause, were well versed in political/philosophical works. One of the more significant writer/philosophers was John Locke. In 1790 Locke completed his “Second Treatise on Government.” The work wasn’t published at the time, however, because Locke, rightfully, feared retaliation by the Crown if his works were to be known. The theories that he presented would undermine the belief that Englishmen were even close to self-government. By 1764, the Sixth Edition of his book had been published, and been read by most of the Founding Fathers.

Locke perceived self-government as a shared enterprise, with rights and responsibilities, both inherent within the nature of that form of government. He suggested that every member of a society which is self governed has, unconditionally, cast his lot, or authority, into a common pool. The share of authority is granted, unconditionally, and cannot be withdrawn. The common shares then are given over to the government, which is modeled after the desire of

the people. The government is operating under a contract, or license, granted by the people, and so long as it fulfills the obligations of that contract, self-government operates in the manner that it was intended. If a person is dissatisfied with certain leaders or policies of the government, he has no right to remove his authority -- it was given unconditionally, and cannot be taken back.

If, however, there is a breach of the contract -- if government fails in its proper roll of conducting the business of the people in the manner that was intended, the person whose power was granted finds himself without recourse -- the breach of contract forces the divestment of the authority from the government back to the person. Nothing has really changed. The person was responsible for the protection of his life, liberty and property prior to casting his lot with the community, and now finds himself once again holding the authority by himself, able to cast his lot with another form that is more likely to provide for his "future security." He may find another group of people with which to join, again, in a form of self-government, or he can continue to protect himself, his rights and his property, in the same manner that the Creator had endowed him with the means to do as man. A careful reading of the Declaration of Independence will show that this concept is embodied in the principles of self-government established after separation from Great Britain. This philosophy was the source of justification for the 'divestment' of British control over the colonies -- their refusal to protect the rights, liberty and property of those who were, until the 1770's, loyal British subjects.

Geographic/Political Background of North America

From 1754 through 1763, Great Britain attempted to maintain her control and permanence in the area known as North America. Spain and France had laid significant claims, and the vast, uncharted areas were open to those that would settle them. The English colonies had assumed that their westerly extension flowed, naturally, to either recognized countries or the ocean. Nobody really realized that a distance of three thousand miles must be traveled before these boundaries would mark the extent of what they felt they possessed.

Spain had established Florida, Mexico and California as her domain, and had remained content with her possessions. France had acquired, and extended westerly, the area known as Canada, and had also established the port at New Orleans, laid claim to the waters of the Mississippi River and established a series of forts along its course. Fear that France would establish colonies to the west of the currently occupied British colonies led to wars of dominion between the two. The colonists, recognizing their responsibility, willingly fought alongside British regulars in defeating the French armies. George Washington's initial military experience, and recognition as a leader, was a result of this conflict.

Beginnings of Tyranny & Subjugation

With the fall of Quebec the wars were over. England now claimed all that had belonged to France, with the sole exception of New Orleans. Britain's dominance was established and the growth of the colonies assured. King George II, however, had spent a major portion of the royal wealth to maintain the war for that decade. Unwilling to bear the burden himself, he sought to regain the cost from the relatively poor colonists, who he perceived to be the beneficiaries of the war.

In 1765, Parliament, at the urging of King George, enacted the "Stamp Act". This act put a tax that ranged from a half-penny (one cent) to ten pounds (fifty dollars) on all law and business papers, newspapers and other publications. George sought to regain the cost of the war at the expense of those who fought it, and who still had very limited means of production and self-reliance.

To the cry of "Liberty, property, and no stamps," the first loads of stamps shipped to the colonies were destroyed shortly after their arrival in New York. The beginning of resistance were manifesting themselves in those who always felt (and were guaranteed by their charters) that they should have the rights of Englishmen. Although the failure of Great Britain to allow direct representation of the colonies in the House of Commons was one of the issues contested, the attitude of the colonists was that only they could impose a tax upon themselves. For the majority in the Parliament to decide that only the colonies would pay the tax, even with representation, would not have satisfied the concerns that were developing in America. The seeds of Liberty had begun to germinate.

The Stamp Act

Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, however, unwilling to submit totally to the demands of the colonies, they passed the Declaratory Act. This was simply a statement that Great Britain did have the right to bind the colonies "in all cases whatsoever". The colonists, however, were not content with the repeal.

Boston had set itself out as the focal point of resistance to British tax policies. In the spring of 1768, General Gage relocated from New York to Boston, stationing his troops in the very heart of town. This imposition on the people of Boston led to frequent quarrels between the citizens and the soldiers.

The Boston town meeting requested Governor Bernard to call a special session of the legislature to deal with this imposition on the town. Bernard refused on the grounds that he would need approval from the Crown to conduct this special session. On September 13, 1768, the Boston town meeting passed a resolution which said, in part:

THE COMMITTEE appointed to take the state of our public affairs into consideration reported the following declaration and resolves:

Voted, as the opinion of this town, that the levying money within this province for the use and service of the Crown in other manner than the same is granted by the Great and General Court or assembly of this province is in violation of the said royal charter; and the same is also in violation of the undoubted natural rights of subjects, declared in the aforesaid act of Parliament, freely to give and grant their own money for the service of the Crown, with their own consent, in person or by representatives of their own free election.

And whereas in the aforesaid act of Parliament it is declared that the raising or keeping a standing army within the Kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of Parliament, is against law, it is the opinion of this town that the said declarations are founded in the indefeasible right of the subjects to be consulted, and to give their free consent in person or by representatives of their own free election to the raising and keeping a standing army among them; and the inhabitants of this town being free subjects have the same right derived from nature and confirmed by the British constitution, as well as the said royal charter; and therefore, the raising or keeping a standing army without their consent in person or by representatives of their own free election would be an infringement of their natural, constitutional, and charter rights; and the employing such army for the enforcing of laws made without the consent of the people, in person or by their representatives, would be a grievance.

And furthermore as His Excellency the Governor has declared himself unable, at the request of this town, to call a General Court, which is the assembly of the states of this province for the redress of such grievances:

Voted, that this town will now make choice of a suitable number of persons to act for them as a committee in convention, with such as may be sent to join them from the several towns in this province, in order that such measures may be consulted and advised as His Majesty's service, and the peace and safety of his subjects in this province may require; whereupon the Hon. James Otis, Esq., the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Esq., Mr. Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, Esq., were appointed a committee for the said purpose, the town hereafter to take into consideration what recompense shall be made them for the service they may perform.

Voted, that the selectmen be directed to write to the selectmen of the several towns within this province informing them of the foregoing vote, and to propose that a convention be held, if they shall think proper, at Faneuil Hall, in this town, on... the 22nd day of September, instant, at 10 o'clock before noon.

The First Resistance

For the first time in the eighteenth century the colonists had come together in a forum to denounce the policies of Great Britain and her agents. They had also begun the utilization of the old concept of Committees of Safety to call together citizens from other towns within the province to join together, in convention, to deal with the imposition of unlawful authority upon English citizens.

The resolve of the colonists hardened with time. Resistance and refusal to comply with the dictates of the parliament continued to increase the tensions between the colonists and the British troops stationed in Boston. On March 5, 1770, a shouting match between British troops and angry colonists, mostly young men, evolved into a near riot. Although the officer in charge of the troops expressed his desire not to fire upon the colonists, a voice from somewhere behind the

troops yelled "fire", which the troops did. The officer then called for a cease fire and reprimanded his troops, but five colonists were killed and seven wounded, two mortally. This event would become known as the **Boston Massacre**. The soldiers were put on trial for murder. Defended by John Adams and Josiah Quincy (who withstood the wrath of angry crowds in the name of justice), all but two were acquitted. Those two soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter, had their thumbs branded and were returned to their regiment.

On April 10, 1770, General Thomas Gage, in a letter to one of King George's principal secretaries, the Earl of Hillsborough, pointed out the limitations imposed on his troops (law enforcement) under peacetime conditions. In describing the situation in Boston, under British law, he points out the limitations on "police" force when he says, "*The troops could not act by military authority, and no person in civil authority would ask for their aid.*"

In 1773, a series of Acts were passed by Parliament, and known by the colonists as "The Intolerable Acts." The object of the acts was to raise revenue to pay the soldiers that the king had sent to restore order in the colonies; to pay the Crown's officers, judges and governors, making them wholly dependent on the Crown; and contract with leading citizens to keep them under British influence in an effort to control the attitude of the colonists.

The colonists retaliated by refusing to buy the products taxed, even if it meant reduced luxury and denial of habits. Because of this resistance the Acts were repealed, with the exception of the tax on tea, and that was reduced to such a low rate as to make it negligible. The principle, however, was that the Crown was attempting to assert its right to tax the colonies. The colonists disagreed on this doctrine and chose to refuse tea and, with it, the attempt to maintain English control over them.

The concern over the actions of the British spread throughout the colonies. Virginia and Massachusetts were at the forefront, and on April 9, 1773, the Boston Committee of Correspondence published the following broadside and sent copies to every town in the province:

Boston, April 9, 1773

Sir,

THE Committee of Correspondence of this Town have received the following Intelligence, communicated to them by a Person of Character in this Place. We congratulate you upon the Acquisition of such respectable Aid as the ancient and patriotic Province of *Virginia*, the earliest Resolves against the detestable Stamp-Act in Opposition to the unconstitutional Measures of the present Administration. The Authenticity of this Advice you may depend upon, as it was immediately received from one of the Honorable Gentlemen appointed to communicate with the other Colonies.

We are,

Your Friends and humble Servants,

Signed by Direction of the Committee for Correspondence in *Boston*,

[*s/ William Cooper*] Town Clerk

Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman of distinction in Virginia, to his Friend in this Town, dated March 14th, 1773.

"I RECEIVED the papers* you sent me, and am much obliged to you for them, our assembly setting a few days after, they were of use to us. You will see by the enclosed Resolutions the true sentiments of this colony, and that we are endeavouring to bring our sister colonies into the strictest union with us, that we may RESENT IN ONE BODY any steps that may be taken by administration to deprive ANY ONE OF US of the least particle of our rights & liberties ; we should have done more but we could procure nothing but news-paper accounts of the proceedings in Rhode-Island. I hope we shall not be thus kept in the dark for the future, and that we shall have from different Committees the earliest intelligence of any motion that may be made by the TYRANTS in England to carry their INFERNAL purposes of enslaving us into execution ; I dare venture to assure you the British situation will be given on our parts to these grand points."

In the House of Burgesses, in Virginia, March, 1773.

"WHEREAS the minds of his Majesty's faithful subjects in this colony have been much disturbed by various rumours and reports of proceedings tending to deprive them of their ancient, legal and constitutional rights.

“ And whereas the affairs of this colony are frequently connected with those of Great-Britain, as well as of the neighbouring colonies, which tenders a communication of sentiments necessary, In order therefore to remove the [?] and to quiet the minds of the people, as well as for the other good purposes above mentioned.

“Be it *resolved*, That a standing committee of Correspondence and Inquiry be appointed, to consist of eleven persons, viz. the honorable Payton Randoph, Esq.; Robert Carter Nichols, Richard Blood, Richard Henry Lee, Benjamin Harrison, Edmund Pendleton, Patrick Henry, Dudley Digges, Dabney Cort, Archibald Cory, and Thomas Jefferson, Esqrs; any six of whom to be a committee, whose business it shall be to obtain the most early and authentic intelligence of such acts and resolutions of the British parliament or proceedings of administration, as may relate to, or affect the British colonies in America, and to keep up and maintain a correspondence and communication with our sister colonies, respecting these important considerations, and the results of such their proceedings, from time to time to lay before this house.

“ *Resolved*, That it be an instruction to the said committee, that they do, without delay, inform themselves particularly of the principles and authority, on which was constituted a court of Inquiry, said to have been lately held in Rhode-Island, with powers to transport persons accused of offences committed in America, to places beyond the seas to be tried.

“ *Resolved*, That the Speaker of this House do transmit to the Speakers of the different assemblies of the British colonies, on this continent, copies of the said resolutions, and desire they will lay them before their respective assemblies, and request them to appoint some person or persons of their respective bodies, to communicate from time to time with the said committee.

*The Votes and Proceedings of the Town of Boston, and News-Papers, containing the Governor’s Speeches and the Answers of the two Houses.

The Constitution is Violated

Eight months later, on December 16, 1773, a small group of men dressed as Mohawk Indians were followed by a crowd to the wharf in Boston. They boarded the ships Dartmouth, Eleanor and Beaver and began dumping all of the tea on board (35,000 pounds) into the harbor. This, of course, was the **Boston Tea Party**.

On January 3, 1774, the Citizens of Philadelphia published a report of an incident in which the ship **Polly**, commanded by Captain Ayres, came up river toward Philadelphia and was informed of the position taken by the city. The narrative, which follows, demonstrates the sincerity of purpose then existing within the colonies. The British controlled government had naught to say, least it raise the passion of the colonists.

The claim that “*levying money... is in violation of the said royal charter*” became the foundation for the efforts to regain “*the rights of Englishmen,*” which became the foundation for the resistance of the colonies. Englishmen were protected by a constitution, which, although unwritten, was established through a series of events beginning with the Magna Carta. The violation of these rights, rather than the protection thereof, by the ministers of the Crown was the bases for the subsequent claim of “*ministerial tyranny,*” which is not unlike the circumstances existing within the United States today. With the refusal of the British government to listen to the petitions of the colonists, the seeds were planted. The union had, based upon resistance to British tyranny, begun to form.

It is especially significant that to note that (item 7) anyone who even aided in off-loading any cargo covered by the boycott would be deemed “*an enemy to his country.*”

THE UNANIMITY, spirit, and zeal which have heretofore animated all the colonies from Boston to South Carolina have been so eminently displayed in the opposition to the pernicious project of the East India Company in sending tea to America, while it remains subject to a duty, and the Americans at the same time confined by the strongest prohibitory laws to import it only from Great Britain, that a particular account of the transactions of this city cannot but be acceptable to all our readers, and every other friend of American liberty.

Upon the first advice of this measure, a general dissatisfaction was expressed that, at a time when we were struggling with this oppressive act and an agreement not to import tea while subject to the duty, our fellow subjects in England should form a measure so directly tending to enforce that act, and again embroil us with our parent state. When it was also considered that the

proposed mode of disposing of the tea tended to a monopoly ever odious in a free country, a universal disapprobation showed itself throughout the city. A public meeting of the inhabitants was held at the State House on October 18 [1773], at which great number attended, and the sense of the city was expressed in the following resolves:

1. That the disposal of their own property is the inherent right of freemen; that there can be no property in that which another can, of right, take from us without our consent; that the claim of Parliament to tax America is, in other words, a claim of right to levy contributions on us at pleasure.

2. That the duty imposed by Parliament upon tea landed in America is a tax on the Americans, or levying contributions on them without their consent.

3. That the express purpose for which the tax is levied on the Americans, namely, for the support of government, administration of justice, and defense of His Majesty's dominions in America, has a direct tendency to render assemblies useless, and to introduce arbitrary government and slavery.

4. That a virtuous and steady opposition to this ministerial plan of governing America is absolutely necessary to preserve even the shadow of liberty, and is a duty which every freeman in America owes to his country, to himself, and to his posterity.

5. That the resolution lately entered into by the East India Company to send out their tea to America, subject to the payment of duties on its being landed here, is an open attempt to enforce this ministerial plan, and a violent attack upon the liberties of America.

6. That it is the duty of every American to oppose this attempt.

7. That whoever shall directly or indirectly countenance this attempt, or in any wise aid or abet in unloading, receiving, or vending the tea sent, or to be sent out by the East India Company, while it remains subject to the payment of duty here, is an enemy to his country.

8. That a committee be immediately chosen to wait on those gentlemen who, it is reported, are appointed by the East India Company to receive and sell the said tea, and request them from a regard to their own character, and the peace and good order of the city and province, immediately to resign their appointment.

In consequence of this appointment, the committee waited upon the gentlemen in this city, who had been appointed consignees of the expected cargo. They represented to them the detestation and abhorrence in which this measure was held by their fellow citizens, the danger and difficulties which must attend the execution of so odious a trust, and expressed the united desires of the city that they would renounce the commission and engage not to intermeddle with the ship or cargo in any shape whatever. Some of the commissioners resigned, in a manner that gave general satisfaction, others in such equivocal terms as required further explanation. However, in a few days the resignation was complete. In this situation things remained for a few days.

In the meantime, the general spirit and indignation rose to such a height that it was thought proper to call another general meeting of the principal citizens to consider and resolve upon such farther steps as might give weight and insure success to the unanimous opposition now formed. Accordingly a meeting was held for the above purpose at which a great number of respectable inhabitants attended, and it appeared to be the unanimous opinion that the entry of the ship at the customhouse, or the landing any part of her cargo would be attended with great danger and difficulty, and would directly tend to destroy that peace and good order which ought to be preserved. An addition of twelve other gentlemen was then made to the former committee, and the general meeting adjourned till the arrival of the tea ship. Information being given of that, the price of tea was suddenly advanced, though it was owing to a general scarcity of that article; yet all the possessors of tea, in order to give strength to the opposition, readily agreed to reduce the price, and sell what remained in their hands at a reasonable rate. Nothing now remained but to keep up a proper correspondence and connection with the other colonies, and to take all prudent and proper precautions on the arrival of the tea ship.

It is not easy to describe the anxiety and suspense of the city in this interval. Sundry reports of her arrival were received which proved premature. But on Saturday evening, the 25th ult, an express came up from Chester to inform the town that the tea ship, commanded by Captain Ayres, with her detested cargo, was arrived there, having followed another ship up the river so far.

The committee met early the next morning, and being apprized of the arrival of Mr. Gilbert Barclay, the other consignee, who came passenger in the ship, they immediately went in a body to request his renunciation of the commission. Mr. Barclay politely attended the committee at the first request; and being made acquainted with the sentiments of the city, and the danger to which the public liberties of America were exposed by this measure, he, after expressing the particular hardship of his situation, also resigned the commission, in a manner which affected everyone present.

The committee then appointed three of their members to go to Chester, and two others to Gloucester Point, in order to have the earliest opportunity of meeting Captain Ayres, and representing to him the sense of the public respecting his voyage and cargo. The gentlemen who had set out for Chester, receiving intelligence that the vessel had weighed anchor about 12 o'clock, and proceeded to town, returned. About 2 o'clock she appeared in sight of Gloucester Point, where a number of inhabitants from the town had assembled with the gentlemen from the committee. As she passed along, she was hailed, and the captain requested not to proceed further, but to come on shore. This the captain complied with, and was handed through a lane made by the people to the gentlemen appointed to confer with him. They represented to him the general sentiments, together with the danger and difficulties that would attend his refusal to comply with the wishes of the inhabitants, and finally desired him to proceed with them to town, where he would be more fully informed of the temper and resolution of the people.

He was accordingly accompanied to town by a number of persons, where he was soon convinced of the truth and propriety of the representations which had been made to him, and agreed that, upon the desire of the inhabitants being publicly expressed, he would conduct himself accordingly. Some small rudeness being offered to the captain afterwards in the street by some boys, several gentlemen interposed and suppressed before he received the least injury. Upon an hour's notice on Monday morning, a public meeting was called, and the State House not being sufficient to hold the numbers assembled, they adjourned into the square. This meeting is allowed by all to be the most respectable, both in the numbers and rank of those who attended it, that has been known in this city. After a short introduction, the following resolutions were not only agreed to, but the public approbation testified in the warmest manner:

1. Resolved, that the tea on board the ship Polly, Captain Ayres, shall not be landed.
2. That Captain Ayres shall neither enter nor report his vessel at the customhouse.
3. That Captain Ayres shall carry back the tea immediately.
4. That Captain Ayres shall immediately send a pilot on board his vessel with orders to take charge of her, and proceed to Reedy Island next high water.
5. That the captain shall be allowed to stay in town till tomorrow to provide necessaries for his voyage.
6. That he shall then be obliged to leave the town and proceed to his vessel, and make the best of his way out of our river and bay.
7. That a committee of four gentlemen be appointed to see these resolves carried into execution.

The Assembly were then informed of the spirit and resolution of New York, Charleston, South Carolina, and the conduct of the people of Boston, whereupon it was unanimously resolved:

That this assembly highly approve of the conduct and spirit of the people of New York, Charleston, and Boston, and return their hearty thanks to the people of Boston for their resolution in destroying the tea rather than suffering it to be landed.

The whole business was conducted with a decorum and order worthy the importance of the cause. Captain Ayres being present at this meeting, solemnly and publicly engaged that he would literally comply with the sense of the city, as expressed in the above resolutions.

A proper supply of necessaries and fresh provisions being then procured, in about two hours the tea ship weighed anchor from Gloucester Point, where she lay within sight of the town, and has proceeded, with her whole cargo, on her return to the East India Company.

The public think the conduct of those gentlemen whose goods are returned on board the tea ship ought not to pass unnoticed, as they have, upon this occasion, generously sacrificed their private interest to the public good.

Thus this important affair, in which there has been so glorious an exertion of public virtue and spirit, has been brought to a happy issue, by which the force of a law so obstinately persisted in to the prejudice of the national commerce, for the sake of the principle on which it is founded (a right of taxing the Americans without their consent), has been effectually broken, and the foundations of American liberty more deeply laid than ever.

The Authority to Appoint Committees

As a result of Parliaments outrage over the destruction of the tea in Boston, the Massachusetts Bay Act closed the port of Boston to all trade until such time as the citizens and town should pay for the tea, and make humble submission to the King. The embargo of Boston created a hardship in obtaining food and other necessities. What little remained in Boston was commandeered by he British.

During recesses of the legislature, there was little that could be done to deal with the continual imposition of authority by the British. The Massachusetts legislature stimulated inter-colonial cooperation through Committees of Correspondence. Governor Hutchinson, of Massachusetts, challenged the authority of the legislature to appoint these committees. Sam Adams and John Hancock were appointed as a committee to respond to the Governor. There response is dated February 5, 1774, and reads as follows:

It affords the great satisfaction to this house to find that His Majesty has been pleased to put an end to an undue claim, heretofore made by the governors of this province, grounded upon a supposition that the consent of the chair was necessary to the validity of the judicial acts of the Governor and Council. Whereby their proceedings, when sitting as the Supreme Court of Probate, and as the court for determining in cases of marriage and divorce, have been so often impeded. The royal order, that the governor shall acquiesce in the determination of the majority of the Council, respects not the Council only but the body of the people of this province. And His Majesty has herein showed his regard to justice, as well as the interest and convenience of his subjects, in rescuing a clause in the charter from a construction which, in the opinion of this house, was repugnant to the express meaning and intent of the charter, inconsistent with the idea of a court of justice, and dangerous to the rights and property of the subject.

Your excellency is pleased to inform the two houses that you are required to signify to them His Majesty's disapprobation of the appointment of committees of correspondence, in various instances, which sit and act during the recess of the General Court by prorogation. You are not pleased to explain to us the grounds and reasons of His Majesty's disapprobation; until we shall have such explanation laid before us, a full answer to this part of your speech will not be expected from us. We cannot, however, omit saying upon this occasion that while the common rights of the American subjects continue to be attacked in various instances, and at times when the several assemblies are not sitting, it is highly necessary that they should correspond with each other in order to unite in the most effectual means for the obtaining a redress of their grievances. And as the sitting of the general assemblies in this and most of the colonies depends on the pleasure of the governors, who hold themselves under the direction of administration, it is to be expected that the meeting of the assemblies will be so ordered, as that the intention proposed by a correspondence between them will be impracticable but by committees to sit and act in the recess.

We would, moreover, observe that, as it has been the practice for years past for the governor and lieutenant governor of this province, and other officers of the Crown, at all times, to

correspond with ministers of the state and persons of influence and distinction in the nation in order to concert and carry on such measures of the British administration as have been deemed by the colonists to be grievous to them, it cannot be thought unreasonable or improper for the colonists to correspond with their agents, as well as with each other, to the end that their grievances may be so explained to His Majesty, as that, in his justice, he may afford necessary relief. As this province has heretofore felt great misfortune of the displeasure of our sovereign by means of misrepresentations, permit us further to say there is room to apprehend that His Majesty has, in this instance, been misinformed and that there are good grounds to suspect that those who may have misinformed him have had in meditation further measures destructive to the colonies, which they were apprehensive would be defeated by means of committees of correspondence sitting and acting in the recess of the respective assemblies.

It must be pleasing to the good people of this province to find that the heavy debt which had been incurred by their liberal aids, through the course of the late war for subduing His Majesty's inveterate enemies and extending his territory and dominion in America is so nearly discharged. Whenever the house of representatives shall deem it incumbent upon them to provide for any future charges, it will be done, as it ought, by such ways and means as, after due deliberation, to them shall seem meet.

In the meantime, the House will employ the powers with which they are entrusted in supporting His Majesty's just authority in the province, according to the royal charter, and in dispatching such public business as now properly lies before us. And, while we pursue such measures as tend, by God's blessing, to redress of grievances and to restoration and establishment of the public liberty, we persuade ourselves that we shall, at the same time, as far as in us lies, most effectually secure the tranquillity and good order of the government, and the great end for which it is instituted the safety and welfare of the people.

“a congress of deputies from the colonies in general is of the utmost moment”

In May, 1774, New York, being comprised mostly of merchants, had received a circular letter from the Boston Committee. The letter requested that all of the colonies support Massachusetts in stopping all trade with Great Britain. New York had established a “committee of fifty-one”, comprised primarily of merchants, in an effort to, at least, forestall cessation of trade and, at the same time, appease the anti-British sentiments of her people. This committee, on May 23, 1774, responded with a proposal for all of the colonies to come together in a “congress of deputies”, which resulted in the First Continental, or, Stamp Act Congress. Their response:

THE ALARMING MEASURES of the British Parliament relative to your ancient and respectable town, which has so long been the seat of freedom, fill the inhabitants of this city with inexpressible concern. As a sister colony, suffering in defense of the rights of America, we consider your injuries as a common cause, to the redress of which it is equally our duty and our interest to contribute. But what ought to be done in a situation so truly critical, while it employs the anxious thoughts of every generous mind, is very hard to be determined.

Our citizens have thought it necessary to appoint a large committee, consisting of fifty-one persons, to correspond with our sister colonies on this and every other matter of public moment, and at ten o'clock this forenoon we were first assembled. Your letter, enclosing the vote of the town of Boston, and the letter of your Committee of Correspondence were immediately taken into consideration.

While we think you justly entitled to the thanks of your sister colonies for asking their advice on a case of such extensive consequences, we lament our inability to relieve your anxiety by a decisive opinion. The cause is general, and concerns a whole continent, who are equally interested with you and us; and we foresee that no remedy can be of avail unless it proceeds from the joint act and approbation of all; from a virtuous and spirited union which may be expected while the feeble efforts of a few will only be attended with mischief and disappointment to themselves and triumph to the adversaries of our liberty.

Upon these reasons we conclude that a congress of deputies from the colonies in general is of the utmost moment; that it ought to be assembled without delay, and some unanimous resolution formed in this fatal emergency, not only respecting your deplorable circumstances, but for the security of our common rights. Such being our sentiments, it must be premature to pronounce any judgment on the expedient which you have suggested. We beg, however, that you will do us the justice to believe that we shall continue to act with a firm and becoming regard to American freedom, and to cooperate with our sister colonies in every measure which shall be thought salutary and conducive to the public good.

We have nothing to add, but that we sincerely condole with you in your unexampled distress, and to request your speedy opinion of the proposed congress, that if it should meet with your approbation, we may exert our utmost endeavors to carry it into execution.

Virginia's House of Burgesses met on May 27, 1774, and proposed a gathering of delegates, much like the New York recommendation, to work in union with the other colonies. The Freeholders of Albemarle County, met and delegated to Thomas Jefferson and John Walker, the authority to represent the County in the both the Virginia Convention of Deputies and the General Congress (First Continental Congress). This committee recognized both the need for the larger congresses and the delegation, directly, of people known well to them, to represent them in these proposed assemblies.

In the second Resolve, Jefferson and Walker suggest that the "*assumptions of unlawful power are dangerous to the right of the British Empire in general.*" Little did anyone anticipate how dangerous these encroachments on the "*rights of Englishmen*" would become to the Empire. Is it possible that the same risks are inherent today as the assumptions of power by the government exceed the constitutional limitations to a much greater degree than existed in 1773?

AT A MEETING OF THE FREEHOLDERS of the County of Albemarle, assembled in the collective body, at the court house of the said county, on the 26th of July, 1774:

Resolved, that the inhabitants of the several states of British America are subject to the laws which they adopted at their first settlement, and to such others as have been since made by their respective legislatures, duly constituted and appointed with their own consent. That no other legislature whatever can rightly exercise authority over them; and that these privileges they hold as the common rights of mankind, confirmed by the political constitutions they have respectively assumed, and also by several charters of compact from the Crown.

Resolved, that these their natural and legal rights have in frequent instances been invaded by the Parliament of Great Britain and particularly that they were so by an act lately passed to take away the trade of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay; that all such assumptions of unlawful power are dangerous to the right of the British Empire in general, and should be considered as its common cause, and that we will ever be ready to join with our fellow subjects in every pact of the same, in executing all those rightful powers which God has given us, for the reestablishment and guaranteeing such their constitutional rights, when, where, and by whomsoever invaded.

It is the opinion of this meeting that the most eligible means of effecting these purposes will be to put an immediate stop to all imports from Great Britain (cotton, osnaburgs [a coarse cloth], striped duffel, medicines, gunpowder, lead, books and printed papers, the necessary tools and implements for the handicraft arts and manufactures excepted. for a limited term), and to all exports thereto, after the 1st day of October, which shall be in the year of our Lord. 1775; and immediately to discontinue all commercial intercourse with every part of the British Empire which shall not in like manner break off their commerce with Great Britain.

It is the opinion of this meeting, that we immediately cease to import all commodities from every part of the world, which are subjected by the British Parliament to the payment of duties in America.

It is the opinion of this meeting, that these measures should be pursued until a repeal be obtained of the act for blocking up the harbor of Boston; of the acts prohibiting or restraining internal manufactures in America; of the acts imposing on any commodities duties to be paid in America; and of the act laying restrictions on the American trade; and that on such repeal it will

be reasonable to grant to our brethren of Great Britain such privileges in commerce as may amply compensate their fraternal assistance, past and future.

Resolved, however, that this meeting do submit these their opinions to the Convention of Deputies from the several counties of this colony, and appointed to be held at Williamsburg on the 1st day of August next, and also to the General Congress of Deputies from the several American states, when and wheresoever held; and that they will concur in these or any other measures which such convention or such congress shall adopt as most expedient for the American good and we do appoint Thomas Jefferson and John Walker our deputies to act for this county at the said convention, and instruct them to conform themselves to these our resolutions and opinions.

“the salvation of North-America, under providence, thereby insured”

On June 10, 1774, the Boston Committee expressed their belief that if a rigid support of the “covenant” (not to trade with Britain) were abided by all would result in salvation of the cause of restoration of the rights of Englishmen. This broadside was posted throughout the colony.

WHEREAS several of our brethren, members of the committees of correspondence in the neighbouring towns, have since our letter of the 8th instant applied to us, to know whether it was expected that the form of the covenant which we inclosed in our letter should be literally adopted by the several towns : We have thought it necessary to inform our respectable fellow countrymen, that the committee, neither in this or any other matter mean to dictate to them, but are humbly of opinion, that if they keep to the spirit of that covenant, and solemnly engage not to purchase any goods which shall be imported from Great Britain after the time stipulated, and agree to suspend dealing with such persons as shall persist in counteracting the salutary design, by continuing to import or purchase British articles so imported, the end we proposed will be fully answered, and the salvation of North-America, under providence, thereby insured.

We are,
Gentlemen,
Your friends and fellow countrymen,
Signed by order and in behalf of the committee of Correspondence for Boston.

As the tensions grew on each side, recognition that additional effort might be warranted occurred to the committees of the Boston area. Knowing that the British needed necessities and realizing that they were acquiring them locally, they recommended that those in the nearby countryside do whatever within their means to deny these supplies to the British. On September 27, 1774, the following broadside was published and distributed to the surrounding communities.

BOSTON, September, 27, 1774.

GENTLEMEN,

THE committees of correspondence of this and several of the neighbouring towns, having taken into consideration the vast Importance of withholding from the troops now here, labour, straw, timber, slitwork, boards, and, in short, every article excepting provisions necessary for their Subsistence ; and being under a necessity from their conduct of considering then as real enemies, we are fully satisfied that it is our bounden duty to withhold from them every thing but what meer humanity requires ; and therefore we must beg your close and serious attention to the inclosed resolves which was passed unanimously ; and as unanimity in all our measures in this day of severe trial, is of the utmost consequence, we do earnestly recommend your cooperation in this measure, as conducive to the good of the whole.

We are,
Your Friends and Fellow Countrymen,
Clerk:

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AT a Meeting of the several Committees of the Towns of *Boston*,
Roxbury, *Charlestown*, *Dedham*, *Braintree*,

*Dorchester, Cambridge, Milton, Woburn, and
Watertown, Mistick, Malden, Stow.*

September 27th, the following RESOLVE and VOTE were passed, *viz.*

WHEREAS the Inhabitants of the towns of *Boston* and *Charlestown*, by the operation of the detested and oppressive port-bill, are now suffering unspeakable distress arising from the entire prohibition of commerce, and the transportation of even the necessaries of life by [transfer] from one town to another, and Whereas, in addition to the severity of said execrable bill, General Gage the military commander of this province and the admiral in his station, are now in the exercise of the most licentious and arbitrary act of oppression by withholding provisions from this town allowed by said act of parliament, by embarrassing, unnecessarily detaining, and thereby preventing the usual supplies of fuel to said town, by harassing, insulting, and villifying the inhabitants posting and re-posting to and from the town of Boston, by alarming the people with the most formidable fortifications at the entrance of said town, by continuing and encreasing their apprehensions, with a design, of erecting batteries and pickets to surround the town, thereby to awe and intimidate, if not to subjugate the inhabitants to a tame and unresisting state of servitude. Therefore,

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of these joint committees that should any person or persons inhabitants of this or the neighbouring provinces supply the troops now stationed in the town of Boston acting in open hostility to the persons and properties of the inhabitants, with labour, lumber, joice, spars, pickets, straw, bricks, or any material whatsoever, which may furnish them with requisites to annoy or in any way distress said inhabitants, he or they so offending shall be held in the highest detestation, be deemed the most inveterate enemies of this people, and ought to be prevented, opposed and defeated by all reasonable means whatever.

VOTED, That it is the opinion of these committees, that committees of observation and prevention should be appointed by each town, particularly in Roxbury, Milton, Dedham, Cambridge, Braintree, Mistick, Charlestown and Watertown, and that the committees of correspondence be desired to appoint committees to see that the resolves of the joint committees entered into this day be faithfully executed.

“delegates of the several colonies., deputed to represent them in a Continental Congress”

Through a process which evolved into the concepts utilized both in the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, delegates were selected at the local (county) level. From there they were sent to the provincial assemblies. From those attending delegates were then selected to represent the colony in the First Continental Congress, which was held in October, 1774. The seeds of the union that would grow into the United States of America had been germinated. With union, and unanimous support for the cause of the rights of Englishmen the colonists knew that it was just a matter of time before the British would suspend their efforts directed at subjugation of the colonists. (The nonintercourse agreement was signed October 20, 1774.) There was still hope that their lives would return to normal within a short period of time. Note that the force and effect was to continue until repeal of the acts which concerned the colonists.

It is also interesting to note that (section 2) the slave trade was a mercantile business of the money merchants of Great Britain, not of the colonies, a discontinuation of the slave trade was mandated. Why has our history propagated a guilt upon the American people when the trade was of English origin?

WE, HIS MAJESTY'S MOST LOYAL SUBJECTS, the delegates of the several colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, deputed to represent them in a Continental Congress, held in the city of Philadelphia, on the 5th day of September, 1774, avowing our allegiance to His Majesty, our affection and regard for our fellow subjects in Great Britain and elsewhere, affected with the deepest anxiety and most alarming apprehensions at those grievances and distresses, with 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 occasioned by a ruinous system of colony administration

adopted by the British Ministry about the year 1763, evidently calculated for enslaving these colonies and with them, the British empire.

In prosecution of which system, various acts of Parliament have been passed for raising a revenue in America; for depriving the American subjects, in many instances, of the constitutional trial by jury; exposing their lives to danger by directing a new and illegal trial beyond the seas for crimes alleged to have been committed in America. And in prosecution of the same system, several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide-extended country; thus, by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked Ministry shall choose to direct them.

To obtain redress of these grievance which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty, and property of His Majesty's subjects in North America, we are of opinion that a nonimportation, nonconsumption, and nonexportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure. And, therefore, we do, for ourselves and the inhabitants of the several colonies whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honor, and love of our country, as follows:

1. That from and after the 1st day of December next, we will not import into British America from Great Britain or Ireland any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, or from any other place, any such goods, wares, or merchandise, as shall have been exported from Great Britain or Ireland. Nor will we, after that day, import any East India tea from any part of the world; nor any molasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, or pimento from the British plantations or from Dominica; nor wines from Madeira or the Western Islands; nor foreign indigo.

2. We will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the 1st day of December next; after which time, we will wholly discontinue the slave trade and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.

3. As a nonconsumption agreement, strictly adhered to, will be an effectual security for the observation of the nonimportation, we, as above, solemnly agree and associate that from this day we will not purchase or use any tea imported on account of the East India Company, or any on which a duty has been or shall be paid. And from and after the 1st day of March next, we will not purchase or use any East India tea whatever; nor will we, nor shall any person for or under us, purchase or use any of those goods, wares, or merchandise we have agreed not to import, which we shall know or have cause to suspect, were imported after the 1st day of December, except such as come under the rules and directions of the 10th Article hereafter mentioned.

4. The earnest desire we have not to injure our fellow subjects in Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies induces us to suspend a nonexportation [agreement] until the 10th day of September, 1775; at which time, if the said acts and parts of acts of the British Parliament hereinafter mentioned are not repealed, we will not directly or indirectly export any merchandise or commodity whatsoever to Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, except rice to Europe.

5. Such as are merchants and use the British and Irish trade will give orders, as soon as possible, to their factors, agents, and correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland not to ship any goods to them, on any pretense whatsoever, as they cannot be received in America; and if any merchant residing in Great Britain or Ireland shall directly or indirectly ship any goods, wares, or merchandise for America in order to break the said nonimportation agreement or in any manner contravene the same, on such unworthy conduct being well attested, it ought to be made public; and, on the same being so done, we will not, from thenceforth, have any commercial connection with such merchant.

6. That such as are owners of vessels will give positive orders to their captains or masters not to receive on board their vessels any goods prohibited by the said nonimportation agreement, on pain of immediate dismissal from their service.

7. We will use our utmost endeavors to improve the breed of sheep and increase their number to the greatest extent; and to that end, we will kill them as seldom as may be, especially those of the most profitable kind; nor will we export any to the West Indies or elsewhere; and those of us who are or may become overstocked with, or can conveniently spare any, sheep will dispose of them to our neighbors, especially to the poorer sort, on moderate terms.

8. We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy, and industry and promote agriculture, arts, and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse racing, and all kinds of gaming, cockfighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments. And on the death of any relation or friend, none of us, or any of our families, will go into any further mourning dress than a black crape or ribbon on the arm or hat for gentlemen, and a black ribbon and necklace for ladies, and we will discontinue the giving of gloves and scarves at funerals.

9. Such as are vendors of goods or merchandise will not take advantage of the scarcity of goods that may be occasioned by this association, but will sell the same at the rates we have been respectively accustomed to do for twelve months last past. And if any vendor of goods or merchandise shall sell such goods on higher terms, or shall, in any manner or by any device whatsoever, violate or depart from this agreement, no person ought nor will any of us deal with any such person, or his or her factor or agent, at any time thereafter, for any commodity whatever.

10. In case any merchant, trader, or other person shall import any goods or merchandise after the 1st day of December and before the 1st day of February next, the same ought forthwith, at the election of the owner, to be either reshipped or delivered up to the committee of the country or town wherein they shall be imported, to be stored at the risk of the importer until the nonimportation agreement shall cease or be sold under the direction of the committee aforesaid. And in the last-mentioned case, the owner or owners of such goods shall be reimbursed out of the sales the first cost and charges, the profit, if any, to be applied toward relieving and employing such poor inhabitants of the town of Boston as are immediate sufferers by the Boston port bill; and a particular account of all goods so returned, stored, or sold to be inserted in the public papers. And if any goods or merchandises shall be imported after the said 1st day of February, the same ought forthwith to be sent back again, without breaking any of the packages thereof.

11. That a committee be chosen in every county, city, and town by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature, whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all person touching this association. And when it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of majority of any such committee, that any person within the limits of their appointment has violated this association, that such majority do forthwith cause the truth of the case to be published in the gazette; to the end that all such foes to the rights of British America may be publicly known and universally condemned as the enemies of American liberty; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.

12. That the Committee of Correspondence, in the respective colonies, do frequently inspect the entries of their customhouses, and inform each other, from time to time, of the state thereof, and of every other material circumstance that may occur relative to this association.

13. That all manufactures of this country be sold at reasonable prices, so that no undue advantage be taken of a future scarcity of goods.

14. And we do further agree and resolve that we will have no trade, commerce, dealings, or intercourse whatsoever with any colony or province in North America which shall not accede to, or which shall hereafter violate, this association, but will hold them as unworthy of the rights of freemen and as inimical to the liberties of their country.

And we do solemnly bind ourselves and our constituents, under the ties aforesaid, to adhere to this association until such parts of the several acts of Parliament passed since the close of the last war, as impose or continue duties on tea, wine, molasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, sugar, pimento, indigo, foreign paper, glass, and painters' colors imported into America, and extend the powers of

the Admiralty Courts beyond their ancient limits, deprive the American subject of trial by jury, authorize the judge's certificate to indemnify the prosecutor from damages, that he might otherwise be liable to from a trial by his peers, require oppressive security from a claimant of ships or goods seized, before he shall be allowed to defend his property, are repealed.

And until that part of the act . . . entitled "An act for the better securing His Majesty's dockyards, magazines, ships, ammunition, and stores," by which any persons charged with committing any of the offenses therein described, in America, may be tried in any shire or county within the Realm, is repealed; and until the four acts, passed the last session of Parliament, viz.: that for stopping the port and blocking up the harbor of Boston; that for altering the charter and government of the Massachusetts Bay; that which is entitled "An act for the better administration of justice. etc.;" and that "for extending the limits of Quebec, etc.," are repealed. And we recommend it to the provincial conventions, and to the committees in the respective colonies, to establish such further regulations as they may think proper, for carrying into execution this association.

The foregoing association being determined upon by the Congress, was ordered to be subscribed by the several members thereof; and thereupon, we have hereunto set our respective names accordingly.

“to unite in defense of our common rights and liberties”

As a result of the Continental Congress, the Maryland delegates returned home with a sense of purpose that is well expressed in the report resulting from their provincial congress held at Annapolis on December 12, 1774.

Note that prices were fixed to prohibit profiteering on the efforts of the united colonies; that the recommendation for the establishing of militia was seen as a necessity to provide protection in lieu of the British forces, and in the final paragraph, the recognition that all individual differences had to be put aside, “be forever buried in oblivion”, in the common effort now before them.

It might be noted that the third Resolve recognizes what has been lost in our history, but is as significant today as it was then, “*that a well-regulated militia, composed of the gentlemen, freeholders, and other freemen, is the natural strength and only stable security of a free government.*”

AT A MEETING OF THE DEPUTIES appointed by the several counties of the province of Maryland, at the city of Annapolis, by adjournment, on the 8th day of December, 1774, and continued till the 12th day of the same month, were present, eighty-five members: Mr. John Hall in the chair, and Mr. John Duckett, clerk.

The proceedings of the Continental Congress were read, considered, and unanimously approved. Resolved, that every member of this convention will, and every person in the province ought strictly and inviolably to observe and carry into execution the association agreed on by the said Continental Congress.

On motion, unanimously resolved, that the thanks of this convention be given, by the chairman, to the gentlemen who represented this province as deputies in the late Continental Congress for their faithful discharge of that important trust; and the same was done accordingly.

To increase our flocks of sheep, and thereby promote the woolen manufacture in this province, resolved, that no person ought to kill any lamb dropped before the 1st day of May yearly, or other sheep, after the 1st day of January next, under four years of age.

To increase the manufacture of linen and cotton, resolved, that every planter and farmer ought to raise as much flax, hemp, and cotton as he conveniently can; and the cultivation thereof is particularly recommended to such inhabitants of this province, whose lands are best adapted to that purpose. And resolved, that no flaxseed of the growth of the present year ought to be purchased for exportation, after the 12th day of this month.

It being represented to this convention that many merchants and traders of this province, from a scarcity of cash to make their remittances and other causes, had sold their goods within twelve months next before the 20th day of October last, at, and sometimes even below, the prime cost;

and that, in many different parts of this province, merchants had vended their goods at very different advance on the prime cost and it appearing to this convention to be unjust to compel such merchants to sell their goods at prime cost, and that one general rule, allowing a reasonable profit to the trader, and preventing him from taking advantage of the scarcity of goods which may be occasioned by the nonimportation, would give great satisfaction to the merchants and people of this province, resolved unanimously; that no merchant ought to sell his goods, at wholesale, for more than 112½ percent -- at retail, for cash, for more than 113 percent -- on credit, for more than 150 percent, advance on the prime cost; and that no merchant, or other person ought to engross any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever. And in case any question should arise respecting the prime cost of goods, every merchant or factor possessing or owning such goods ought to ascertain the same on oath, if requested to do it by the committee.

As a further regulation to enforce an observance of the late Continental association resolved unanimously, that in all cases where breaches of the Continental association or the resolves of this convention shall happen and be declared such by any committee of a county, no gentleman of the law ought to bring or prosecute any suit whatever for such offender. And if any factor shall commit any breach of the said association or resolves, that no gentleman of the law ought to bring or prosecute any suit for any debt due to the store of which the said factor has the management, after notice as aforesaid.

Resolved, that it is earnestly recommended by this convention to the people of this province, that the determinations of the several county committees be observed and acquiesced in. That no persons, except members of the committees, undertake to meddle with or determine any question respecting the construction of the association entered into by the Continental Congress. And that peace and good order be inviolably maintained throughout this congress.

Resolved unanimously, that if the late acts of Parliament, relative to the Massachusetts Bay, shall be attempted to be carried into execution by force in that colony, or if the assumed power of Parliament to tax the colonies shall be attempted to be carried into execution by force, in that colony or any other colony, that in such case, this province will support such colony to the utmost of their power.

Resolved unanimously, that a well-regulated militia, composed of the gentlemen, freeholders, and other freemen, is the natural strength and only stable security of a free government, and that such militia will relieve our mother country from any expense in our protection and defense; will obviate the pretense of a necessity for taxing us on that account, and render it unnecessary to keep any standing army (ever dangerous to liberty) in this province. And therefore, it is recommended to such of the said inhabitants of this province as are from sixteen to fifty years of age, to form themselves into companies of sixty-eight men; to choose a captain, two lieutenants, an ensign, four sergeants, four corporals, and one drummer for each company; and use their utmost endeavors to make themselves masters of the military exercise. That each man be provided with a good firelock and bayonet fitted thereon, half a pound of powder, two pounds of lead, and a cartouch box, or powder horn and bag for ball, and be in readiness to act on any emergency.

Resolved unanimously, that it is recommended to the committees of each county to raise by subscription, or in such other voluntary manner as they think proper, and will be most agreeable to their respective counties . . .

Resolved unanimously, that it is recommended to the several colonies and provinces to enter into such or the like resolutions, for mutual defense and protection, as are entered into by this province. As our opposition to the settled plan of the British administration to enslave America will be strengthened by a union of all ranks of men in this province, we do most earnestly recommend that all former differences about religion or politics, and all private animosities and quarrels of every kind, from henceforth cease and be forever buried in oblivion; and we entreat, we conjure every man by his duty to God, his country, and his posterity, cordially to unite in defense of our common rights and liberties.

“our enemies are aided by some of our deluded fellow citizens”

Meanwhile, in Boston, recognition of the efforts of the Tories and the British to bypass the restrictions imposed by both Boston and the Continental Congress, directed the local committees to take a more substantial position in dealing with the restrictions previously imposed. Certificates allowing transportation of certain goods were issued to allow identification of those who violated the trust of the colonists. The means of supplying an army was being curtailed. This resulted in the British having to seek many supplies from Canada rather from local sources. This also began the gradual increase in authority of the committees, which, eventually, evolved into a total parallel government, including dealing with criminal matters. Note the advice that “*as your own salvation depends on it.*”

BOSTON, February 25, 1775.

Gentlemen,

The following Proceedings and Votes of the joint committees of this and seven other towns are conveyed to you by their unanimous request. The importance of the subject at this critical time when our enemies are aided by some of our deluded fellow citizens, must strike you forcibly. We do not doubt but you will adopt the following, or a similar plan as your own salvation depends on it. What you do, must be done soon or it will be ineffectual. The army by the number of waggons which they have engaged must be in want of a number of horses and cattle, it is wholly with our friends in the country to prevent their supply, but we need not dictate to them the mode. The cannon and baggage of the army must remain here unless you supply them with horses and cattle, but on your firmness and resolution we depend. We have a good cause, the thought is animating, take courage, and rely upon a kind providence for protection and success in your resistance, in case it becomes necessary by your being attacked. . We are, &c.

By Order of the Committee

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AT a meeting of the committees of Correspondence of the several towns of Boston, Charlestown, Cambridge, Medford, Lexington, Watertown, Brookline, and Concord,

WHEREAS the representative Body of this province in Congress, assembled at Cambridge, considering that certain persons were employed in divers kinds of work for the army, in order to enable them to take the field and distress the inhabitants of the country, did strongly recommend to the committees of Correspondence and Inspection in the several towns and districts in this province, to see their Resolves of the 7th instant, relative to supplying the troops now stationed in Boston, with timber, boards, spars, pickets, tent-poles, canvas, bricks, iron, waggons, carts, carriages or implements aforesaid strictly and faithfully adhered to.

IN compliance with the above recommendation, and from a conviction of its being our duty to prevent such supplies, Voted, That the following method, if strictly adhered to, will, in our opinion, be effectual, Viz. That no teams be suffered to load in, or after loading, to pass through, any town in this province for Boston, if their load, in whole or in part, consists of any of the above-mentioned articles, or oats, except the teamster can produce from the committee of Correspondence for the town where he loaded, an instrument, certifying his name, place of abode, the particulars of his load, the person who sends, and to whom to be delivered in Boston, and that said certificate ought to be delivered to one or more of the committee of Correspondence for Boston before the teamster presumes to unload.

Massachusetts Articles of War

Massachusetts held its second provincial congress in February, 1775, to prepare for war. Direction was given to establish and supply the militia. On April 5, 1775, the Massachusetts provincial congress adopted fifty-three articles of war. The reality of the severity of the disagreements between Parliament and the colonies was beginning to have its effect. Although there was still hope of reconciliation, and still little open discussion of separation, some were beginning to speak as if there was no possibility of resolution, and that the “*ministerial usurpation*” would continue so long as any allegiance to the Crown remained. The “*ministerial army*” maintained in Boston is not unlike the police forces and federal alphabet agencies that we have today. There was no war, but the use of force to compel compliance to laws made

by the ministerial heads of state is the "standing army" that the Constitution prohibited as a consequence of these experiences.

The preamble to the articles of war begins to assert the authority of the provincial congress (delegates from the various committees) to "*self-preservation.*" The right and duty to cast off usurpation has begun to manifest itself in the breasts of the fledgling American cause. A change of attitude toward the sovereign authority of the Crown was being replaced by the recognition of the viability of the concept of true self-government. The seeds of Locke's theories had been planted, and the actions of the committees and assemblies had proven to the colonists that they were quite capable of governing themselves.

Whereas the lust of power, which of old oppressed, persecuted, and exiled our pious and virtuous ancestors from their fair possessions in Britain, now pursues with tenfold severity us, their guiltless children, who are unjustly and wickedly charged with licentiousness, sedition, treason, and rebellion, and being deeply impressed with a sense of the almost incredible fatigues and hardships our venerable progenitors encountered, who fled from oppression for the sake of civil and religious liberty for themselves and their offspring, and began a settlement here on bare creation, at their own expense; and having seriously considered the duty we owe to God, to the memory of such invincible worthies, to the King, to Great Britain, our country, ourselves, and posterity, do think it our indispensable duty, by a lawful ways and means in our power, to recover, maintain, defend, and preserve the free exercise of all those civil and religious rights and liberties for which many of our forefathers fought, bled, and died, and to hand them down entire for the free enjoyment of the latest posterity;

And whereas the keeping a standing army in any of these colonies in times of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony in which such army is kept is against law; and whereas such an army with a large naval force is now placed in the town and harbor of Boston for the purpose of subjecting us to the power of the British Parliament; and whereas we are frequently told by the tools of administration, dupes to ministerial usurpation, that Great Britain will not, in any degree, relax in her measures until we acknowledge her "right of making laws binding upon us in all cases whatever"; and that if we refuse by our denial of her claim, the dispute must be decided by arms, in which, it is said by our enemies, "we shall have no chance, being undisciplined, cowards, disobedient, impatient of command, and possessed of that spirit of leveling which admits of no order, subordination, rule, or government"; and whereas, from the ministerial army and fleet now at Boston, the large reinforcement of troops expected, the late circular letters to the governors upon the continent, the general tenor of intelligence from Great Britain, and the hostile preparations making here, as also from the threats and repeated insults of our enemies in the capital town, we have reason to apprehend that the sudden destruction of this province is in contemplation, if not determined upon;

And whereas the great law of self preservation may suddenly require our raising and keeping an army of observation and defense in order to prevent or repel any further attempts to enforce the late cruel and oppressive acts of the British Parliament, which are evidently designed to subject us and the whole continent to the most ignominious slavery; and whereas in case of raising and keeping such an army it will be necessary that the officers and soldiers in the same be fully acquainted with their duty, and that the articles, rules, and regulations thereof be made as plain as possible, and having great confidence in the honor and public virtue of the inhabitants of this colony that they will readily obey the officers chosen by themselves, and will cheerfully do their duty when known, without any such severe articles and rules (except in capital cases), and cruel punishments as are usually practiced in standing armies; and will submit to all such rules and regulations as are founded in reason, honor, and virtue -- ;

It is therefore resolved, that the following articles, rules, and regulations for the army that may be raised for the defense and security of our lives, liberties, and estates be, and hereby are, earnestly recommended to be strictly adhered to by all officers, soldiers, and others concerned, as they regard their own honor and the public good.

“Delegates, out of their Body to meet the Continental Congress”

During the period of increased tensions, Massachusetts was not the only colony to express concern and respond by increasing communication and control. Albany, New York had a Committee which had, during the course of the birth of America, from eleven to 19 districts, each of which would be represented in Albany, which, in turn, would send delegates to New York provincial congresses (second Resolve). This structure of representation is repeated over and over, throughout this critical period of our history.

Those in Boston who had been subjected to the limitation of trade had begun to suffer as a result of the British troops having priority over goods. Voluntary charity (not government proscribed as in ‘socialism’ and the United States today) was a means to alleviate the burden created by this imposition (sixth Resolve).

The minutes of many of the Albany and Schenectady, New York minutes have been preserved, and give the most detailed observation of the actual operation of the committees. Following are the minutes for March 21, 1775, Albany Committee of Correspondence.

Albany 21st March 1775.

At a meeting of the Committee of Correspondence for the City and County of Albany, held at the House of Richard Cartwright, Inholder in said City.

Members Present

Jacob C. Ten Eyck	for the first
Henry Bogart	Ward.
John N. Bleecker,	for the second .
Abraham Yates Jun ^r .	
David Edgar...	for the third.
Killiaen V ⁿ . Rensselaer	for two
Henry Quackenbush	Districts
	Manor Rens.
Walter Livingston	Manor Living ⁿ .
John De Wandelaer	Schaghtekocke
John Knickerbacker	District
Peter Van Ness.	Claverack District
Daniel Budd	District of Schoharry &
Peter Zielen	Duanesborough
Isaac Fonda,	Nistegaone & Half Moon
John Tayler	Saraghtoga

First. The Chairman put the Question whether the Members were fully authorised by their Constituents to Elect Delegates or Deputies, to meet the Deputies from the other Counties it appeared, that they were, unanimously impowered to appoint either

Secondly. A Motion was made by Walter Livingston Esq^r whether Deputies shall be appointed to represent the City and County of Albany, to meet the 20th day of April next at the City of New York, with the Deputies of the different Counties, to Elect Delegates, out of their Body to meet the Continental Congress to be held at Philadelphia the 10th day of May next.

Thirdly. Resolved. Unanimously that the Deputies be appointed accordingly to represent the County, M^r. Henry Bogart on Consideration of said Motion Dissented, he being for appointing Delegates for the City and County to meet the intended Congress in Philadelphia.

Fourthly. Resolved. by a Majority that five Persons be appointed to meet the intended Provincial Congress.

Fifthly. Resolved. Unanimously that Abraham Yates Jun^r. Walter Livingston Esq.^{rs} Col. Schuyler, Col. Ten Broeck and Col. Peter Livingston, are appointed Deputies, to represent the City and County of Albany, at the intended Provincial Congress, to be held at the City of New York the 20th day of April next, for the purpose of appointing Delegates to represent this Colony, at the next Congress to be held at Philadelphia the 10th day of May next.

Sixthly. Resolved. That the Donations for the Poor at the Town of Boston, be sent there as soon as Conveniently may be. Ordered that the Subscriptions be Collected, and the Store Keepers render an Account and deliver such Donations and the Hands of Jacob C. Ten Eyck, Jacob Lansingh and Henry Quackenbush, and that they Buy Wheat for the Money, and send the same in proper Time, to the Relief of the said Poor at Boston, and that the said Donations be delivered, at the places appointed in the respective Districts, on or before the 1st day of May next.

Seventhly. Resolved. That two hundred Copies of the following Advertisement be Printed, and that the same be sent to the Committees of Correspondence in the different Districts of this County, to be by them Stuck up at the most publick Places in said District (to wit)

Whereas subscriptions have been made to raise a Donation throughout the different Districts in the County of Albany for the Relief of the suffering Poor in the Town of Boston some of which Donations have not been delivered into their respective Store Houses.

Therefore we earnestly request, that those who have Subscribed, and have not sent their Donations would send them in by the first day of May next, and farther we recommend to the Committees of each District, that they use their Influence for the more speedy, collection thereof and those who have not subscribed, and are inclined to Contribute to the Relief of the above Poor, their Donations will be gratefully received.

By order of the Committee
Abraham Yates Jun^r. Chairman

Eightly. Resolved. That the Chairman of the Committee Sign the Advertisements.

Ninthly. Resolved. That the Sub-Committee appointed by the fourth Resolve of 24th January last be and are now again unanimously appointed to Transact the Business set forth in said resolve

Tenthly Resolved. That the Clerk sign a Copy of the Resolve which appoints Abraham Yates Jun^r. Walter Livingston Esq^{rs}. Col. Schuyler Col. Ten Broeck, and Col. Peter R. Livingston Deputies to represent the City and County of Albany, and also that he signs the following Instructions to the said Deputies, to wit.

Gent.

In consequence of advices from New York intimating that the Committee of Correspondence for that City and County have adopted the made of appointing Delegates by the different Counties, to represent the Province, in provincial Congress to be held at New York the 20th of April next.

We the Committee of Correspondence for the City and County of Albany approve of the above mentioned Plan, and being highly Sensible of your Zeal Fidelity and Virtue as well as Abilities to serve your Distressed Country, we have appointed you Gent. Viz. Col. Schuyler, Col. Abraham Ten Broeck, Col^o. Peter R. Livingston, Abraham Yates Jun^r. and Walter Livingston Esq^{rs}. to represent the City and County of Albany in said Provincial Congress, Vesting in you full Power and Authority to chuse out of your Body, such and as many Members as to you shall seem proper, to represent us at the General Congress to be held at Philadelphia the 10th of May next. And as many Subjects may present themselves to your View when Assembled in Provincial Congress, which we at present cannot forsee, and of Course cannot instruct you in 'tis the Sense of this Body, that you Act in such Cases, as your Prudence and Wisdom shall direct.

By order of the Committee
John N. Bleecker Clerk

“the Preservation of our Country from Slavery”

On April 12, 1775, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress met at Concord, Massachusetts. Recognizing that war was imminent and that organization and communication imperative if the Americans were to be able to defend their liberty, they became more assertive in mandating the creation of committees. The final Resolve of this document is especially compelling, and might apply to our current situation.

In *Provincial Congress,*
Concord, *April 12, 1775.*

WHEREAS the Preservation of our Country from Slavery, depends under GOD, on an effectual Execution of the Continental and Provincial Measures for that Purpose;

RESOLVED, That there be now appointed for each County in this Colony, a Committee consisting of Five Persons, any Three of whom to be a Quorum, whose Business it shall be, to receive from the Committees of Correspondence in their respective Counties, a State of the Conduct of the Towns and Districts, with Respect to their having executed the Continental and Provincial Plans as aforesaid ; and it shall be the Duty of said Committees to meet on the first Wednesday of May, July, September, November, January and March, and prepare a Report of the same, to be laid before the Congress at it's then next Session, that any Neglect of such Towns and Districts in executing such Plans, may be speedily and effectually remedied.

ALSO, RESOLVED, That it be, and it is hereby strongly recommended, to the Committees of Correspondence in the several Towns and Districts in this Colony, some Time before the first Wednesday in May, July, September, November, January and March aforesaid, to render to any one of the Members of their County Committees aforesaid, a true State of Conduct of their respective Towns and Districts, with Respect to their having executed each Plan recommended by the Continental and Provincial Congresses ; and to use their utmost Diligence for this important Purpose.

And whereas some Towns and Districts in the Colony, may be destitute of so excellent an Institution as Committees of Correspondence :

RESOLVED, That it be, and it hereby is strongly recommended that such Towns and Districts, forthwith to choose them, and to afford them Assistance at all Times, in effectually suppressing the Efforts of the Enemies of AMERICA, whenever they shall make them.

Signed by Order of the Provincial Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

The First Americans -- Lexington & Concord

Lucy Hosmer kept a diary. Through the entries shown below, her pride and fear both show through. It is not difficult to understand the apprehension that existed those few days before the Battles of Lexington and Concord (April 19, 1775). The Provincial Congress had met just the week before (above), and recognized that war was inevitable. The greatest military force the world had every known was to become the mortal enemy of these simple farmers who, despite the overwhelming odds, placed their liberties ahead of their very lives.

The institution of the Committees had given the organizational structure and source of cumulative courage necessary to take on the task that had swelled the hearts of Americans. The acceptance of the committee concept well before these fateful events provide the only means by which the task could be accomplished, and which could not have been accomplished without them. The committees had become the backbone of the American system, and the focal point of cooperation.

Tuesday, April 18, 1775

I really don't have time to spare from our household chores to write in this Journal--and yet, I must, to calm my nerves and enable me to think clearly about these perilous times. This I must surely do to help my husband, Joseph Hosmer, our four children, and our dear village of Concord. No shots have yet been fired but already we are a wartime community...

...for months now, our household, and those of our neighbors, have given over the major portions of our lives to the task of preparing Concord for war...what I mind more than the hiding of weapons is the need to watch out for Tories and spies amongst our own townspeople... Much of the time I am too busy to be anxious. But at night, after my work is done, I do worry and mainly

about Joseph. Some of our neighbors say that all this anger at the Mother Country started here-abouts with the speech he gave last year at the Middlesex Convention when he defended our rights against Mr. Daniel Bliss, the famous Tory lawyer, who mocked our folly in resisting the mighty British empire and urged us all to stand loyally by King George and Old England.

Yesterday, the Committee of Safety ordered the dispersal of the military supplies here in Concord into the neighboring towns. Last night Joseph and I drove by ox team two wagon loads of ammunition from Acton to hide on Deacon Jonathan Hosmer's farm there. His twenty-year-old son, Abner, is Joseph's third cousin and an Acton Minuteman.

Wednesday, April 19, 1775

The reverend William Emerson, who is always impetuous (even Phebe, his wife, says so) proposed: "Let's go after them and fight 'em right now!" But Colonel Barrett ignored this from The Cloth and ordered our men to withdraw to a position on the heights above the North Bridge where they would be near enough to see what was going on there.

...Then they set the village Liberty Pole on fire just to mock us. That fire got out of control and spread to the roof of the Court House which surely would have been destroyed if it hadn't been for old Martha Moulton, who keeps house for Dr. Minot. She saw the Court House beginning to burn and rushed up to some British Officers, who were standing nearly on the green, and implored them to put out the fire. At first they laughed at her and mocked her pleas. But, she kept on pleading loudly and gave them no peace until they put out the fire.

They [the Minutemen] marched in double file toward the North Bridge to the fife strains of "The White Cockade" with Captain Issac Davis's company in front of the lines. As they advanced they could see three British companies crowding together at the far end of the bridge. Two or three of the Red Coats were observed trying to pull up the planks! But they soon gave up and ran back to their companions. Our men marched nearer and nearer to the bridge to the beat of Abner Hosmer's drum. The British fired warning shots into the air. Our men were marching forward. Suddenly, the Red Coats fired a volley and Abner Hosmer and his Captain, Issac Davis, fell dead... Joseph said that the battle of the North Bridge did not take more than two or three minutes, but I'll wager that those brief moments will not be forgotten by any of our people.

...Then the Minutemen dispersed--some to go home. But Joseph (Hosmer) and some of his men carried Abner Hosmer's body and that of Captain Davis to Major Butrick's farm nearby. Many of the Minutemen didn't stop fighting but ran through the fields to the East Quarter of Concord, thinking to intercept the retreating Redcoats there. But, these men were acting without orders from any officer. There were all kinds of rumors flying around...such that the Redcoats believed that our men were taking scalps of their wounded. 'Tis a horrible thought, and, of course, not true. But hearing of it turned Major Pitcairn's hot British blood cold! About noon today the Redcoats began their retreat to Boston, going back the way they came -- by the Bay road, but without the glory of their fife and drum with which they arrived in our village. Waiting for them behind a ridge which runs beside the road were the Minutemen who had run leaderless across the fields to head them off. As the British came into sight marching in precise military formation, our men opened fire on them Indian fashion, each man for himself. A great many Redcoats soon lay dead and the rest demoralized. Near Fish Hill in Lexington, they broke ranks and fled. Many of our Minutemen, including Joseph and his brother Benjamin, pursued the Redcoats all the way back to Cambridge... My dear husband is safe at home now and our family secure under our roof, Thank God. The house is very still and all but me are asleep.

Lucy Hosmer

“a matter of greatest importance”

Just a week after the fateful Battles at Lexington and Concord, the Albany Committee responded to the sketchy information they had received. Unlike Massachusetts, the imminence of war was not as strong. Their reaction to the news created concern, yet action could not be taken under the perceived authority of the local committee. The recognition of the severity of the situation seems apparent, yet the recognition that “*the sense of the County*” was necessary for action to be taken indicates the good faith the delegates to the committee had, with regard to such a severe decision. Quite unlike today’s politicians

Albany 26th April 1775

At a meeting of the Sub-Committee of Correspondence for the City and County of Albany, held at the House of John 5 Lansing Inholder

Members Present

Henry Bogart
Henry Quackenbush
Robert Hoakesly
John N. Bleecker
David Edgar

A Letter being produced dated Pittsfield 25th April 1775. Signed by Thomas Allen, James Easton and John Brown, a supposed Committee of Correspondence, or Select Men of the City of Albany, and the same being taken into Consideration, it was resolved that it be answered in the following manner, Viz.

Albany 26th April 1775

Gent.

We received your Letter of the 25th Instant and the same being taken into Consideration by a few Members, of the Sub-Committee of Correspondence, it is resolved that it be answered.

We are extremely sorry to find that the Kings Troops have commenced Hostilities against your Province, we as a Sub-Committee being not full, cannot take upon us to answer that part of your Letter requesting assistance, being a matter of greatest importance, which matter to be left to a future day when the Sense of the County can be taken, and as to your fears of the Inhabitants of Kenderhook taking up arms against you, we look upon as entirely groundless.

We are Gent.

Your Most Humble Servants
By order of the Committee
John N. Bleecker

Resolved that John N. Bleecker sign the foregoing Letter.

By May 1, 1775, the Albany committee had become more cognizant of the severity, immediacy and permanence of the situation. In the minutes of the two meetings held that day we can begin to sense the responsibility that was, by then, being realized throughout the colonies. Like any anticipated event of great significance, only when the event actually occurs is the full impact felt. Every effort necessary to prevail in the coming few years would have to be directed and controlled by the people, themselves. The great experiment of true self-government had begun.

Without experience, leaders were sought out from each community, and re-appointed or replaced every six months. Recognition of the ability of the common man over the aristocracy as the true source of governmental authority and ability were now becoming manifest in the application of the committees. A New Order of the Ages had begun -- the ability of man to control his own destiny, to dissolve and form a new government, recognizing only the LORD as supreme, had begun.

Albany 1st May 1775.

At a meeting of the Sub-Committee of Correspondence held at the House of John 5 Lansing Inholder.

Members Present

Abraham Yates Jun Chairman
Col. Philip Schuyler
Henry Bogert.

John Tayler
John N. Bleecker

Killiaen V.ⁿ Rensselaer

David Edgar

First. Resolved. That the following Advertisement be published through the Town.

Whereas the various accounts that have been received of the extraordinary Commotions both in the Province of Massachusetts Bay and at New York, makes it indispensibly necessary that the Sense of the Citizens should be taken on the line of Conduct they propose to hold in this Critical Juncture every Person therefore is most earnestly intreated to attend at the market house in the third Ward at four O Clock this afternoon to give his Sentiments, It is expected that no Person whatever

Secondly. Resolved. That the Chairman Sign the several Papers relative to this Days Transaction

Thirdly. Resolved. That the following proposals be read to the Citizens, at their intended meeting this afternoon ---

Are you willing to Co-operate with our Brethren in New York, and the several Colonies on the Continent, in their opposition to the Ministerial Plan now prosecuting against us

Are you willing to appoint Persons to be (Conjointly with others to be appointed by the several Districts in this County) a Committee of Safety, Protection and Correspondence with full Powers to Transact all such matters as they shall conceive may tend to the Weal of the American Cause.

If Yea.

Who are the Persons you chuse to appoint.

After the several Questions had been separately proposed to the People Assembled the following Persons were appointed to be a Committee of Safety, Protection and Correspondence, Viz^t

for the first Ward	Second Ward	Third Ward
Jacob C. Ten Eyck	John R. Bleecker	John H. Ten Eyck
Henry Bogert.	Jacob Lansing Jun ^r .	Abraham Ten Broeck
Peter Silvester	Jacob Cuyler	Gerrit Lansingh Jun ^r .
Henry Wendell	Henry Bleecker	Anthony E. Bratt.
Volkert P. Douw.	Robert Yates	Samuel Stringer
John Bay	Stephen DeLancey	Abraham Yates Jun ^r .
Gysbert Marselis	Abraham Cuyler	Cor ^s . V ⁿ Santvoordt

**“with full Power to transact all such matters
as they conceive may tend to promote the Weal of the American Cause”**

This second set of minutes for the day reflects a more serious attention to the recent events in Massachusetts (Lexington and Concord). Events every few months had slowly impressed upon the Americans the severity of the situation, and slowly they expanded their levels of assumption of authority. The significance of April 19, 1775, was yet to have its full impact on the colonists, but the reality and eventuality of war were now absolute.

Albany 1st May 1775.

At a meeting of the Committee of Safety, protection and Correspondence for the City of Albany (this day chosen) and now convened at the House of Richard Cartwright.

Present.

for the first Ward	Second Ward	Third Ward
Jacob C. Ten Eyck	Jacob Lansing Jun ^r .	John H. Ten Eyck
Henry Bogert.	Jacob Cuyler	Abraham Ten Broeck
Peter Silvester	Henry Bleecker	Gerrit Lansingh Jun ^r .
Henry Wendell	Stephen DeLancey	Anthony E. Bratt.
Volkert P. Douw.	Abraham Cuyler	Samuel Stringer
John Bay		Abraham Yates Jun ^r .
Gysbert Marselis		Cor ^s . V ⁿ Santvoordt

chosen for the second Ward
John R. Bleecker
&
Robert Yates
but absent

Resolved. that Abraham Yates be and he is appointed Chairman of this Committee.

Resolved. that Peter Silvester be and he is hereby appointed Secretary of this Committee

Resolved. that John Ostrander be appointed to summon and attend this Committee and be paid for the same

Resolved. that each Member be fined the Sum of two shillings for non attendance at every future meeting unless such absent Member gives satisfactory reasons for his Non attendance.

Resolved. that the following Letter be sent to the Committee of Correspondence at Boston by way of Captⁿ. Barent Ten Eyck.

Gentlemen.

While we lament the mournful Event which caused the Blood of our Brethren in the Massachusetts Bay to flow, we feel that satisfaction which every honest American must experience at the Glorious stand you have made, we have an additional satisfaction from the consequences which we trust will [blank] in uniting every American in Sentiments and Bonds, which we hope will be indissoluable by our Enemies -- This afternoon the Inhabitants of this City convened and unanimously renewed their former Agreement that they would Co-operate with our Brethren in New York and in the several Colonies on the Continent in their opposition to the Ministerial Plan now prosecuting against us and also unanimously appointed a Committee of Safety Protection and Correspondence, with full Power to transact all such matters as they conceive may tend to promote the Weal of the American Cause -- We have the fullest Confidence that every District in this extensive County will follow our Example, On the twenty second Instant a Provincial Congress will meet when we have not the least doubt but such effectual Aids will be afforded you, as will Tyrants and their Minions that as we were born free, we will live and die so, and transmit that inestimable Blessing to Posterity, be assured Gentlemen that nothing on ours Parts shall be wanting to evince that we are deeply impressed with a Sense of the necessity of Unanimity, and that we mean to Co-operate with you in this arduous struggle for Liberty to the utmost of our Power, The Bearer Captⁿ. Barent Ten Eyck who is expressly sent, has our Orders to shew this to the several Committees in his way to the Town, in which the Enemy is encamped which occasions it being unsealed. permit us to entreat you to favour us with as circumstantial an Account of the late engagement as your Time will allow, and to beg you to give such direction as that we may be favoured with the intelligence of every important Event as soon as possible-- We are Gentlemen with the warmest Wishes and most fervent Prayers for your Success, safety and the success of the Common Cause.

Your Most Humble Serv^{ts}.
By order of the Committee
Abraham Yates Jun^r Chairman

Following the directive of the Albany Committee, the Township of Schenectady appointed their first committee on May 6, 1775. Subsequently, three members (one who was not mentioned in the minutes of the 6th) refused to serve.

At a meeting of the freeholders & Inhabitants of the Township of Schenectady, the 6th of May, 1775, the folloewing persons were unanimously Chosen to be a Committee of Correspondence, safety & protection for said Township, viz.

Rinier Minderse,
James Wilson,
Hugh Mitchell,
Henry Glen,
Harmanas Wendle,

John Sanders,
Abraham Oothout,
Tobyaus Ten Eyck,
John Rosebom, Christopher Yates.

At the meeting of the above members the 8th of May, at the house of Robert Clench, John Sanders and Tabyus Ten Eyck refused to serve.

“Enemies to the Rights of Mankind, and the Interest of America”

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress had relocated to Watertown. Recognizing, with a greater degree of urgency than before, the potential problem with Tories, “*Enemies to the Rights of Mankind, and the Interest of America,*” more authority was granted to deal with this exigency. The assumption of authority, outside of the previously accepted form, was beginning to manifest itself.

In Provincial Congress, Watertown, May 8th, 1775.

WHEREAS there are divers Persons now in this Colony, who have by their Conduct discovered themselves to be Enemies to the Rights of Mankind, and the Interest of America ; and whereas our very peculiar Situation, renders it absolutely necessary, not only to discriminate them from those who have shewn a Disposition to be friendly to their Country ; but likewise to put it out of their Power to join with the open and avowed Enemies of America, in their Endeavours to injure and subjugate their Countrymen to the full Operations of the tyrannical System of the British Administration, and the Ruin and Destruction concerted by the British Parliament against these Colonies -----

Therefore RESOLVED, That it be and hereby is recommended to the several Committees of Correspondence in the several Towns and Districts where such Committees have been appointed, and to the Selectmen of such Towns and Districts as have not appointed them, to enquire into the Principles and Conduct of such suspected Persons, and that they cause all such to be disarmed who do not give full and ample Assurances, in which they can with Safety confide, of their Readiness to join their Countrymen on all Occasions, in Defence of the Rights and Liberties of America ; and likewise that they take effectual Steps to put it out of the Power of such Persons to obstruct by any Means whatever, the Measures which shall be taken for the common Defence ; and it is also hereby recommended to the good People of this Colony, that they take effectual Care to secure Obedience to the several Resolves of Congress, for the Regulations of the militia, and cause a due Regard to be paid to the Orders of the several Military Officers, who have been elected by the Suffrages of the several Companies and Regiments, agreeable to the Resolves of Congress.

Joseph Warren, President P. T.

Attest, SAMUEL FREEMAN, Secretary P. T.

Whenever charges were lodged against a person thought to be inimical to the cause, the committee would review the information and respond. They had not yet presumed authority to physically require the presence of those charged. This would come later. Attention to the possibilities was, however, always present. On May 22, 1775, the Schenectady Committee dealt with such accusations.

At a meeting of the Committee, 22^d May, 1775.

Present

Rinier Minderse,
John Rosebom,
James Wilson,

Harmanas Wendle,
Abraham Oothout,
Hugh Mitchell,

Abraham Swits, John Vroman & John Clute informed this board that they were informed by good authority that one Mr. Fletcher, a schoolmaster in the Town, that Colonel Guy Johnson would Com down the river with five thousand Indians, and Cut us all of, And further said that it would be right, and if he hed it in his Power he would do the same, for we were all rebels.

The above report having been taken into Consideration, Resolved, that said Fletcher be sent for to know his motives for so saying, and to answer to the above Charge.

Said Fletchaer having been twice sent for did not appear, Therefore Resolved, that the Complainers be acquainted therewith.

Logistics for War

The need to maintain and supply an army was becoming apparent. The Massachusetts Provincial Congress began dealing with this issue by issuing the following directive was sent to each of the local committees on May 25, 1775.

Supply Chamber, Watertown, May 25th, 1775.

GENTLEMEN,

The Quantity of Bread daily expended by the Army raised by this Colony for the Preservation of the Lives, Liberties and Properties of the Inhabitants of this and other American Colonies, is very large, and you are sensible that a Failure to supply this necessary and important Article will be attended with the most fatal Consequences. The Time which the Committee of Supplies have had to prepare, has been hitherto so short and taken up in equally important Matters, that we have not been able to make effectual Provision, and are under a Necessity of requesting your Assistance to accomplish it -- We therefore desire, Gentlemen, that you will immediately purchase or cause to be purchased for the Colony Army, all the Flour, Wheat, Rye and Indian Corn in the Hands of the Inhabitants of your Town, which is not wanted for their private Consumption, and hire Teams for transporting the same to the Magazine under the Care of Mr. William Hunt, of this Place.

We assure ourselves that a Regard to the Salvation of your Country, as will as yourselves and Families, will induce you to conduct in this Affair ; and we shall cheerfully allow for the Flour and Grain which you shall send us such Prices as you shall certify to be customary in your Town, and to the Teamers that you shall judge to be an adequate and usual Allowance for carting.

We are sincerely, Gentlemen, your Friends and humble Servants.

DAVID CHEEVER per Order.

To the Selectmen or Committee of Correspondence.

P. S. Peas and Beans also be wanted.

“to raise three companies of minute men”

The Second Continental Congress had been called to be held in July, 1775. The New York Provincial Congress sent out to each of the larger committees a request for delegates. Albany then directed each of its districts to send members to the Albany Committee meeting of May 27. On May 26, the Schenectady Committee addressed this request. They also responded to the urgency of the present situation by establishing three companies of militia.

At a meeting of the Committee, 26th May, 1775:

Present.

Christopher Yates, Chairman,

Rinier Minderse,

Hugh Mitchell,

James Wilson,

Abraham Oothout,

John Rosebom,

Harmanas Wendle.

Information being given to this board that Elisha Abbey, lately from the Oneida Castle, had some intelligence to offer to the board relative to Colonel Johnson and the Indians.--

On motion made, Resolved, that said Elisha Abbey give his information upon oath.

Received a letter from the Committee of Albany, requesting some of the members of this board to attend a General meeting of the Committee there the 27th Inst., on business of importance. In consequence of said letter, Resolved, that Abraham Oothout & Harmanas Wendle be a sub-committee from this board to attend said General meeting, at Albany the 27th Inst.

On motion made, Resolved, to request the public at their meeting the 27th Inst., to appoint Cornelious Cuyler, Esq., & Jecobus Teller to be members of this board, in the room of Jon Sanders and Tabyus Ten Eyck; also to raise three companies of minute men in this Township for its safety, in manner following, viz: two companies in the Town & one company in the westina,-- that each company consist of one Captain, two Lieutenants, four Serjants, three Corporals, an drum, and

fifty privites to choose their own officers, and that when said companies are formed, the Captain to give in, Each, a list of his Company to the Committee, and that said companies spend a few hours every week in learning the military Excercise.

“let our Enemies never have Cause to upbraid us with an infringement of the Law”

By July 22, 1775, the Albany Committee found itself dealing with a multitude of problems. Powder was necessary to defend against Indians, who were being excited by the British; “public servants” who maintained allegiance to the Crown had to be dealt with (Sheriff White was eventually jailed until he was willing to sign the Association); control had to be exerted to prevent over-reaction; and, judicial process had to be instituted outside of the Crown’s court. Each of these is addressed in the following minutes.

Committee Chamber 22nd July 1775 at 11 of the Clock P. M.

Present
Abraham Yates Chairman

Henry Bleecker
Jacob Lansingh Jun^r.
Jacob Cuyler
Peter Silvester
Volkert P. Douw
Gerrit Lansingh Jun^r.
Abraham Cuyler

Robert Yates
Peter Schuyler
Anthony E. Bratt
Corn^s. Van Santvoordt
John Bay
Jeremiah Van Rensselaer

Received a Letter from the Committee of Schonectady Dated 22nd July 1775. inclosing a Letter from the Committee of Tyron County directed to that Body dated Caghnawaga 22nd July 1775, which said Letters are in the following Words to wit.

Schonectady July 22nd: 1775

Gen^t.

We have just now received the inclosed Letter which speaks for itself.

We are of opinion that it is necessary some thing be done in this affair, as we well know them to be our Enemies, and have often declared themselves so, there is no time to be losst for the people of the Mohawks River are all gathered together, and their Harvest going to Ruin -- We can’t help to observe that we think it won’t do for our friends to return to their home, as they meet with insults every day and are not safe therefore may take a very bad effect on our friends of the Mohawks River. Powder is much wanted both here and on the River.

We are Gen^t. Your Hum Servants
By order of the Committee
Chris^r. Yates Chairman

Cachnawaga July 22nd: 1775

Gen^t.

The Sheriff having confined John Fonda last Thursday the People in this Neighbourhood to the amount of 100 went up to the Goal and took him out, after which going to take the Sheriff out of Pickens House, the Sheriff fired on the People who returned it.

Expecting that an attempt would be made to retake Fonda we have collected together about 5 or 600 Men to protect Fonda and take the Sheriff Prisoner. We have wrote to Sir John Johnson Bar^t. and requested him to deliver the Sheriff to us, or that we would take him by Force.

The Gen^t. we sent up being John Frey and Anthony Van Veghten inform us that Sir John has got about 400 Men in Johnstown and has fortified his House with small Arms, and S^r. John declared to Mess^{rs}. Frey and Van Veghten that he would protect the Sheriff so long as he remained in his House -- As the Sheriff gives us a great deal of Trouble Insulting us on every occasion, and bids us open Defiance, we are therefore now determined to have him, and as we understand that there are Field Pieces in Schonectady, we request you would send us a Couple

with all the Implements necessary, the Bearers have orders to make all the dispatch possible, We should be glad if you would send a few Men armed to guard the Waggon up-- If there is none in Schonectady send the Bearers to Albany if we can be served there-- The hurry & Confusion we are necessarily in will apologize for this Letter

We are Gent. with Respect
By Order of the Committee
Chris^r. P. Yates

Resolved that a Letter be prepared for the Committee of Schonectady which was done in the following Words to wit.

Gent.

We have this moment received your Letter covering the unhappy advices from Tyron County. By this and the information we have received by M^r. Newkerk the bearer thereof it appears to us that the Sheriff by process took M^r. Fonda Prisoner and confined him to Goal. However groundless the Cause of Action may probably appear yet as it is the undoubted right of the Subject to proceed by Action for any real or supposed Injury or wrong, and as no prohibition has yet been declared by the Provincial or Continental Congress we cannot therefore help observing to you that tho' we admire the Spirit of Freedom wherewith those Inhabitants are animated yet that it was at least Imprudent in them to force M^r. Fonda from Goal as the same Laws under Colour whereof he was confined will give him his remedy for an unlawful Imprisonment.

It is now more than probable to us that the Sheriff has repeatedly been imprudent in his Conduct-- that he differs from us in his Ideas upon the present political Struggles for American Freedom That his Actions in various instances may have been in the highest degree unwarrantable and insulting but let our Enemies never have Cause to upbraid us with an infringement of the Laws and Constitution which we are studiously endeavouring to preserve against Parliamentary encroachment

It gives us pain that we on this head differ in Sentiment with our Brethren to the Westward; but we flatter Ourselves in the expectation, that when they will suffer passion and Resentment to subside, that they will agree with us in those observations

Upon consideration of this matter we have deputed Mess^{rs}. Abraham Yates and Peter Silvester who together with such of your Members as you chuse to associate with them for the purpose to heal those unhappy and distressing differences we are Gent.

Your Humble Servants
Robert Yates Chairman
Pro Tempore

Attest
John Bay Sec^y.

Whereas there is now a great disturbance subsisting in Tyron County arising from a dispute between Alexander White Esq^r. Sheriff of said County and M^r. John Fonda, and for quieting and settling said disturbance

Resolved that a Committee be appointed from this Board to go to Tyron County to interpose and use their endeavours to quiet the Minds of both parties and bring them to an amicable settlement, And

That Mess^{rs}. Abraham Yates and Peter Silvester be a Committee for the purpose aforesaid

“forbid the inhabitants to sell or give the Indians aney rum”

Other matters would, invariably, come before the committees. Some might even be viewed with humor as we look back on the thoroughness of the efforts to deal with every-day problems. Schenectady had to deal with just such a problem on August 19, 1775.

At a meeting of the Committee, 19th Aug^t 1775:

Present,

Cornelious Cuyler,
Jacobus Teller,
Abraham Oothout,

John Rosebom,
Hugh Mitchell,

Received a letter from Turbat Frances, one of the Commissioners for Indian affairs, requesting that no rum or strong liquor be sould to the Indians as they pass thraug this Town to Albany, where they are to hold a Counsel.

Having taken the contents of said letter in Consideration, Resolved, that the Crier be sent Round the Town to forbid the inhabitants to sell or give the Indians aney rum as they pass through this Town.

“enimical to this Country”

Meanwhile, New Hampshire, though far from the battle front, had to begin dealing with those who felt that subjugation under British rule was superior to self-government. On November 16, 1775, the provincial Congress addressed the matter.

In CONGRESS at Exeter,

November 16th, 1775.

Voted THAT the Committees of Safety or of Correspondence, in each Town or Parish, in this Colony, be desired to transmit to the Congress or Committee of Safety for this Colony, the Names and Places of Abode of all such Persons as they suspect to be any Ways enimical to this Country, with the Causes and Evidence of such Suspicions ; And that this Vote be printed in Hand-Bills and dispersed through this Colony.

Extract from the Journal of the Congress,
Attest, NOAH EMERY, Assistant Sec’y.

Dealing with Matters Formerly Conducted by the Crown’s Government

Frequently, local committees recognized needs of their citizens and would join together to develop a means to address them. Three Committees of Correspondence from Massachusetts addressed certain judicial matters in their meeting of May 29, 1776.

At a Meeting of the Committees of Correspondence, &c. of the towns of Mendon, Uxbridge, and Douglas, on the 29th Day of May 1776, in consequence of some articles of recommendation from the Committees of Correspondence, &. for the County of Suffolk, convened in the month of April, 1776, which articles are as follows :

1. That it is the judgment of this Convention that it is necessary and constitutional for to have County Assemblies erected, the members to be chosen in each year, one or more in each town, with power to grant County Taxes, and to establish Roads, and to perform all acts proper for the County Assemblies ; these chosen to be paid by the Counties that chose them.

2. That all deeds of lands be recorded in the town where the land lays, to be recorded by the Town-Clerk for the time being, and that each town be at liberty, at each annual March meeting, to chuse a Register for that end, said Clerk or Register to have such fees for their services, as the same town they serve agree to give.

3. That all Deceaseds Wills be proved and recorded, and Estates settled in each town, where the Deceased last lived, by the Selectmen, and recorded by the Town-Clerk in the same town ; and that each town have liberty at each annual March meeting, to chuse a Committee (or town Council) to prove Wills and settle Estates ; and a Register to Record Wills and Settlements of Estates, said Selectmen or Committee, and the Town-Clerk or Register’s fees to be each year agreed by the same town, and that any person agrieved by the Decree of any Selectmen or Committee, as the last named premisee, be allowed an appeal to this Colony’s Council.

And it is the opinion of this body, that a general meeting of the Committees of Correspondence, &c. for the County of Worcester be had : Wherefore we desire their attendance at the widow Stearns's, inn-holder in Worcester, on Wednesday the 26th day of June next, at 9 o'clock-forenoon, to consider on the aforesaid articles, or any other that then may be thought necessary.

Per order, JOHN TYLER, Chairman.

To Come to the Aid of Your Country

Not yet aware of the “unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America”, New Hampshire faced the reality of the war against British aggression and the need for a militia to protect them from probable attack from Canada. On July 4, 1776, the following directive was sent to each committee. The acceptance of authority of the citizens of the colonies, even to the extent of fielding an army was finally recognized by the fledgling Americans. The roots of what would become the greatest nation the world had ever known had been firmly planted in the rich soil of North America. The fertilizer of John Locke and other political philosophers had nurtured thoughts which had never been tested in reality, yet now they were becoming manifest in a manner which would have made the theorists proud.

EXETER, July 4, 1776.

In the House of Representatives,

July 4th, 1776.

VOTED, That three Hundred Hand Bills be immediately printed and distributed in this Colony, in the following Words, viz.

Colony of New Hampshire

To the Selectmen and Committees of Safety and of Correspondence, and to all Officers Civil and Military in the several Towns of this Colony.

You and each of you are now called upon, in behalf of yourselves and your distressed Country, to exert every Nerve in forwarding the enlisting and making up the Quota's of Men, in the respective Places you belong to, that they may march forward, and join their Brethren under General SULLIVAN, and enable him to repel the Army coming against us from Canada.

Sent up for Concurrence,

P. WHITE, Speaker,

IN COUNCIL, Eodem Die,

Read and Concurred.

E. Thompson, Sec'y.

The Defense of Philadelphia

Delegates having been assembled for the Second Continental Congress, as a result of their selection, first, at the district committee level, then at the County committee level, finally at the provincial assembly or congress level, to go to Philadelphia, carried the sympathies of their ‘constituents’ with no uncertainty as to the desire of their neighbors. The first fifteen months of war, and Washington's few successful campaigns against the British army, and, probably most importantly, the communication and coordination achieved as a result of the committees, led to both a belief in the providential wisdom of their ability to conduct, and prevail, in the war, and that separation, not reconciliation, should be the objective of the campaign.

The colonial courage developed into strength of conviction that led to the Second Continental Congress, which, on July 2, 1776, approved the wording for a document that would become known throughout the world. The Declaration of Independence was formally signed on July 4, Independence Day. A declaration had been made to the world that recognized the abstract concept of self-government could be manifest into reality. The right to cast off the government that had attempted to “reduce them under absolute Despotism” ; the “duty” to “provide new Guards for their future security” had become reality and cause for celebration. The order of the day, however, was business in Philadelphia. The now “United States Continental Congress,” realizing that the British army was approaching Philadelphia and threatening New York, issued the following broadsides:

Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Congress this morning directed us to confer with the Committee of Safety and Inspection, and the Field Officers now in town, about a proper mode of collecting the militia of this province, in order to form a flying camp, to cover Pennsylvania and New Jersey, from Attacks of the Enemy, who have landed on Staten-Island, and will probably direct their March this Way, if they should imagine the Attempt on New-York too hazardous. Necessity obliges us to dispense with forms, and to avail ourselves of the advantage, which we may reasonably hope from your being assembled : We, therefore, most earnestly request you immediately to collect the Forces of your several Counties, and march them down to Brunswick, where the Congress will furnish them with provisions, and allow them Continental pay.

Men who have the safety of their country at heart, need no other incentive to the greatest exertions, than such as arises from its danger, for which reason, we have thought it necessary barely to inform you of the fact ; with this addition, that the Militia of New-Jersey are already, for the most part, in New-York ; so that *that* province will be defenceless without your timely aid.

We are, Gentleman, your most obedient and humble servants,

B. Franklin, Robt. R. Livingston, Committee of Congress
F. Hopkinson, J. Dickinson

To the Committee of Associators,
at Lancaster.

GENTLEMEN,

We beg your most serious attention to the contents of the within letter, and by the desire of the Committee of Congress, signify to you our approbation thereof, and that it is our opinion only the four thousand five hundred men are meant by the Committee. It is hoped those volunteers who have engaged to serve in the flying camp, will march immediately the highest way to Brunswick, in New-Jersey, and that the regular muster-rolls will be kept by the colonels of the several battalions.

As soon as a company is formed, it is expected it will march without waiting for the battalion. As there is to be a conference between Delegates of New-York, New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and the Committee of Safety, with this Committee, and the Field Officers of the five battalions of this city and the liberties, to-morrow morning, at the State-House, at seven o'clock, we will let you know the results of their consultation.

Signed by Order of the Committee,

THOMAS MCKEAN, Chairman:

Philadelphia, Committee-Chamber, July 4th, 1776.

To the Convention of Associators, of the
Province of Pennsylvania, at Lancaster.

Committee of Safety has Matured

Though the information currently available is rather sketchy, it is clear that the Committees played such a roll in the War of Independence, and the decade prior to the War, that it is an indispensable part of our history. How could such an important aspect as the very foundation of the process leading to the goal of self-government have disappeared from our history and heritage?

Perhaps knowledge of what the most valuable weapon ever found to fight tyranny and despotism had to be lost in order to allow those evils to once again dominate the ex-colonies of Great Britain. Perhaps the suppression of this obvious truth, and valuable tool was masterminded by those who sought to regain their dominance over "her lost children".

Those lost children, however, have grown of age. And their parents, the Founding Fathers, have passed this heritage on to us -- it has not been lost, only misplaced, and brought forward once again, by divine Providence, to aid us in

restoring that Land of Liberty that was won at the cost of thousands of lives and established as “the New Order of the Ages”, a government under God, by his people.

The Authority of the Committees

The minutes from Albany and Schenectady are from a book published by The University of the State of New York. In the Introduction to that book, James Sullivan, PhD., summarizes the source of authority and the duties carried out by the New York committees. The book, published in 1923, has been a valuable resource in understanding more of the vital roll the committees played in creating this great nation.

INTRODUCTION

One is almost immediately impressed with the orderly and legal way in which the Revolution was carried on. At the beginning the committee seemingly merely regarded itself as a military committee to assist in raising and supporting troops. It was very particular not to interfere at first with the civil and judicial functions of government. It was only later, when the officials in charge of such matters either fled or failed to perform their duties, that the committee felt called upon to intervene, and then only generally to the extent of seeing that other officials were properly chosen.

No committee of revolutionaries showed a more careful regard for the fact that they owed their powers to the people who elected them and no suggestion is even found that the members should continue in power beyond the time for which they were chosen.

Everything pertaining to the successful prosecution of the war they felt to be within their province. It was an almost bewildering array of activities. (1) The raising , drafting, equipping, disciplining, training, officering, stationing and paying of troops. (2) The exemption from military duty of those in essential industries or employment. (3) The detection, imprisonment, punishment and exile of the disaffected, spies and emissaries. (4) The suppression of organized revolts within the county and the prosecution of those guilty of speaking adversely of the patriot cause. (5) The support of those made poor by the war, the burial of their dead, and the helping of refugees. (6) The collection of the excise and the regulation of taverns. (7) The supervision of the construction of hospitals, barracks, forts and prisons. (8) The assumption of authority over ordinances and powers of the city officers and the control of firemasters and fire regulations. (9) The regulation of prices for all kinds of articles, particularly tea, sugar and salt. (10) The regulation and encouragement of trade and manufactures, and the inspection of bad products. (11) The handling of appeals to control housing difficulties, fix wages and prevent hoarding. (12) The encouragement of auxiliary aid such as the knitting of socks for the soldiers, collecting linen rags, medicines, and instruments. (13) The control of issuance of paper money and counterfeiting. (14) The quarantining against smallpox. (15) The rationing of food, particularly of wheat, preventing its distillation into whiskey. (16) Subscriptions for the poor at home and in Boston. (17) The supervision of elections of members of subdistricts and for members of the Provincial Congress and the legislature. (18) The maintenance of law and order. (19) The establishment of night watches. (20) The management of Indian affairs and relations.

The Albany Committee, as a study of the minutes will disclose, consisted of members chosen from a variable number of districts, usually seventeen to nineteen, into which the county was divided, and the three wards of the city of Albany. (The Albany Committee, however, as an examination of the minutes will show, increased the number of districts at times to suit the convenience of the inhabitants.)

A General Association

Through these early beginnings, the Committees grew from means of filling in during the recess of the legislature, and as local town meeting functions to the administrators of a new nation, born of the concept of self-government. The right to contract, or to form an association, for whatever purpose desired, was fundamental to English law, and is equally

so today. These associations were developed for the purpose of protecting the interest of the colonists against whatever evil or enemy might threaten them.

The Albany minutes provide us with an example of a General Association which is referred to in these minutes. When people were identified as “inimical to the cause of American Liberty”, they would usually find the accusations dropped if they were to join the Association. Frequently, a few days in *Goal* (jail) would convince the accused that he should join the cause. Then, a man’s word was his bond.

The associations appear to have begun with just a few members, or subscribers. As time went on, they grew in size, sometimes resulting in breaking in to more accommodating sizes (districts). The effectiveness of the boycotting of merchants who sold English goods, or charged unreasonable prices, must have been effective, for it appears to have stopped both practices.

As these fledgling seeds of our current form of government grew, it becomes clear that their ability to respond to the needs, and assume whatever authority necessary to achieve their goals, to achieve the desired ends. Surely, as well, the methods of conducting their business improved with experience. As with any form of meeting, experience improved the concept and application. The ultimate tool against tyrants was developed during these early times, and would continue to do so until the end of the War of Independence, resulting in the “*Republican Form of government*” (Article IV, Section 4) guaranteed in the **Constitution for the United States of America**.

GENERAL ASSOCIATION

A General Association agreed to and subscribed by the Members of the several Committees of the City and County of Albany.

PERSUADED that the salvation of the Rights and Liberties of America depends under God on the firm Union of it’s Inhabitants, in a Vigorous prosecution of the Measures necessary for it’s Safety; and convinced of the necessity of preventing the Anarchy and Confusion, which attend a Dissolution of the Powers of Government

WE the Freemen, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the City and County of Albany being greatly Alarmed at the avowed Design of the Ministry, to raise a Revenue in American; and shocked by the Bloody Scene now acting in the Massachusetts Bay Do in the most Solemn Manner resolve never to become Slaves; and do associate under all the Ties of Religion, Honour, and Love to our Country, to adopt and endeavour to carry into Execution whatever Measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention for the purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the Execution of the several Arbitrary and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament until a Reconciliation between Great Britain and America on Constitutional Principles (which we most ardently desire) can be obtained; And that we will in all things follow the Advice of our General Committee respecting the purpose aforesaid, the preservation of Peace and good Order and the safety if Individuals and private Property.

John Barclay Chairman	Sam ^l . Van Vechten	Henry Van Veghten
	Peiter Becker	Jo Young
	Ebenazar Allen	Richard Esselstyn
Walter Livingston	Simeon Covell	Othniel Gardner
John Bay	Asa Flint	Baret Dyne
James Mcgee	James Parrot	Ab ^{rm} Cuyler
Tynans Collins		Robert Mc:Clallen
Isaac Van Aernam	his	Henry Wendell
Gisbert Marselis	Henry χ L. Leake	Corn ^s Van Santvoordt
Phi. P Schuyler	mark	R ^r . Bleecker
George White	Andries Witbeck	Henry Bleecker
John McClung	Mat: Visscher	John H Ten Eyck
Gershom Woodworth	Sam ^l : Stringer	Jacob Bleecker Jun ^r
Bastejaen T Vischer	Gerrit Lansing Ju ^r	Jn ^o . J: Beeckman
Flores Bancker	John Ten Broeck	Har ^s Wendell
John Knickerbacker Jun ^r	Robert Yates	Matthew Adgate
Barent Vanderpoll	Henry I Bogart	Ab ^m : Yats Jun ^r
William Vanbergen	John Van Loon	John Tayler
John Abbott	Ab Ten Eyck	Rutger Lansingh
Jacobus Williamson		

Henry Quackenboss

John M: Beeckman

John D Fonda

John Van Rensselaer Ju^r

John Price

Anthony Van Schaick

Dirck Ten Broeck

Reitgert Bronck

Friderich Beringer

Reynier Van Aalsteyn

Philip van veghten

Joshua Losee

Anthony Van Bergen

Albartus Van Loon

Mynd^t Roseboom

An Association agreed to and subscribed by the Members of the several Committees of the City & County of Albany

We the Subscribers Inhabitants of the County of Albany and Colony of New York do voluntarily and solemnly engage under all the Ties held sacred amongst mankind at the risk of our Lives and Fortunes to defend by Arms the united American Colonies against Hostile attempts of the British Fleets and Armies untill the present unhappy Controversy between the two Countries shall be settled.

"Warn the committee"

Perhaps this understanding will help us to heed the advice of Thomas Jefferson:

"Warn the committee to be on their guard!"

Thomas Jefferson, on his deathbed.