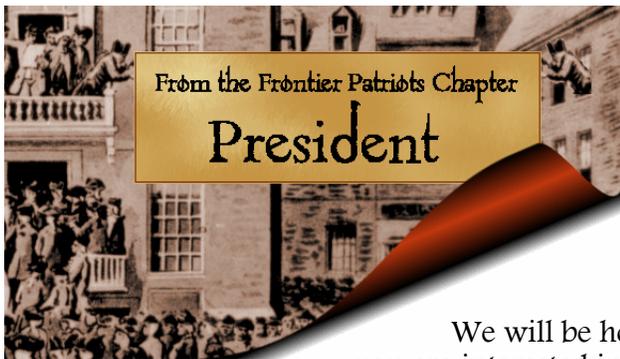


This is NewsLetter Issue No. Four ~ For the year 2015



The next meeting of the Frontier Patriots Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will be held at King's Family Restaurant, 3001 6th Avenue, Altoona, PA on Saturday, December 5, 2015 starting at 12 Noon.

We will be holding election of officers for 2016 at this meeting. If you are interested in being an officer in our chapter, please contact me at 814-239-2392 or [dhammaker@aol.com](mailto:dhammaker@aol.com) . Please don't forget to pay your 2016 dues. You can pay online at <http://www.passar.org/> or by sending your payment to the address on your dues notice. I hope to see you on December 5.



## A Catalyst For Revolution

How did a small number of colonists become American Rebels? Did you ever stop to think about that question? Did the Sons of Liberty just materialize out of thin air? Did someone (assuming, God) snap His fingers and the Committees of Correspondence spontaneously emerged out of some sort of grey *mist*?

What we learned in history class in grade school were usually dates and names of people and places for events that made up our national and regional history. But the way that things came about were seldom discussed. Teachers invariably create lesson plans to accommodate required

state-wide testing, and the minute probing into cause and effect relationships has just never been required, and therefore never performed. As long as students memorized the names and dates of major events, the state-funded educational system was satisfied. And as we grew older, the understanding of the genesis of, or rather of the spark that gave life to events in the past have probably taken second place to more pressing matters. We got families to care for, jobs to perform and millions of other activities that occupy our attention on a day to day basis.

But for a moment, let's pause and take into consideration the means by which the American Revolutionary War actually came about. Let's demystify it.

First, it must be understood that most, if not all, of the (British) colonial legislatures of the Eighteenth Century were composed of men who had some influence in their community. They tended to fall into three categories. They were either involved in businesses that gave them inherent influence (such as merchants, land speculators and clergy), or they were industrious and alpha-types who got involved as a result of personal motivation (*i.e.* entrepreneurs), or they were scions of wealthy families: positions in the military and government could always be bought. Very few, if any, legislators had studied law. Those that graduated from law schools became lawyers but not necessarily legislators.

Professional legislators were a breed that would not appear until a later date. Although most people assume that the words *amateur* and *professional* refer to the degree of knowledge and experience one has in any particular field (thereby influencing whether they would produce an inferior or a superior product), the word *professional*, as compared to *amateur*, actually refers to the fact that a 'professional' in any field derives the majority of his income from the practice of that field. The distinction has little if anything to do with skill. Between two painters, an amateur and a professional, the amateur might be better (*i.e.* more skilled) than the professional, but so long as the amateur painter derives the majority of his income from another job, he will be considered an amateur. Unlike the 1700s, nearly every legislator who inhabits society at the present time is a *professional* legislator. We sometimes refer to them as 'career politicians.'

In order to understand how a fervor of revolt could develop among the British Colonists, we must divorce our thinking from an awareness of the present-day congressional maelstrom of career politicians who are probably more concerned about how they will spend their tax-funded retirement pensions than how they can help their constituents. We must keep in mind that virtually all of the colonial lawmakers were *amateurs* at that job, deriving their incomes from other pursuits.

In the 1760s and 70s, a legislator might just as easily have been a farmer as to have been a lawyer. The first courts held in the county of Bedford beginning in March 1771 were conducted not by judges (*i.e.* professional law-givers), but by Justices of the Peace. Judges did not replace Justices as the primary magistrates in the courts of Pennsylvania until the passing of the state's constitution of 1790. In fact, the very first Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held at Bedford on 16 April 1771, was conducted by six men previously named as Justices for the county, none of whom were lawyers. They included William Proctor, Robert Cluggage, Robert Hanna, George Wilson, William Lochry and William McConnel. None of these men are known to have been professional, or career, politicians. William Proctor, a great<sup>5</sup>-grandfather of the author of this newsletter, made a living as a farmer, not as a professional legislator. Robert Cluggage operated a grist mill prior to becoming a captain of a company of Bedford County militia. Robert Hanna owned a tavern in the part of Bedford County that would, in 1773, become Westmoreland County. George Wilson had originally resided in the colony of Virginia and had commanded a company of the Hampshire County, Virginia militia in the 1760s, prior to moving to the part of Bedford County that would, in 1783, become Fayette County. Nothing is known about William Lochry; history books that mention him simply note that the Lochry family was 'prominent' without explanation. The last Justice, William McConnel, is a mystery also, but undoubtedly was not a professional legislator either, as evidenced by the lack of information regarding his life. As can be seen, the Justices who held court for the first session in Bedford County were basically ordinary citizens: *amateur* legislators all.

So why is it important to note that the early Bedford County legislators were not professional lawmakers? It is because Bedford County was not unique. Events happening throughout the other counties of Pennsylvania, and throughout the other colonies would have been known, and perhaps duplicated, by the inhabitants of Bedford County. Studies of the backgrounds of the Justices for Cumberland, York, Lancaster, and the other counties to the east

of Bedford, would probably all have the same result. A review of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania would, no doubt, bear the same fruit. Many people are surprised to learn that John Hancock, before serving as a delegate to the Continental Congress, was a merchant and smuggler. Thomas Jefferson, another delegate to the Continental Congress, exemplified the legislator who became such by virtue of his inherited wealth. George Washington, despite having been born into a wealthy family, made a living as a surveyor. Washington's experience in surveying throughout the western frontier of the Virginia Colony helped him to gain a military commission in the Virginia Militia, which in turn had a positive influence on his choice as the man to lead a 'continental' army when the time came.

We have a tendency to put the Founding Fathers on pedestals, to elevate them to sainthood status. And when we do that, it's hard to imagine them doing mundane, ordinary things. But they were just humans like us. They required daily nourishment and rest at night. They suffered from time to time with sickness and diseases. And, like today, they communicated with one another by means of talking face to face or by using the most up-to-date forms of technology.

In the 1700s, the most current form of technology for communication was the printing press. And it was the printing press that helped the countless sparks of liberty to be fanned into a firestorm. Those colonists who chafed under the oppressive Acts being passed by the British Parliament found a convenient outlet for their frustration in the printing press. Broadside and pamphlets, legal petitions and newspapers were delivered to a wide audience in a relatively short time.

Broadside, a cross between posters and books, and pamphlets could be easily and somewhat inexpensively printed in large volumes and distributed far and wide. The broadside was usually printed on one side of a large sheet, used to broadcast a single opinionated subject. The pamphlet was often a more detailed essay, such as a sermon, consisting of a large sheet printed on both sides and folded into a compact size that could easily be slipped into a coat pocket. As quickly as a man and his associates could pass either a broadside or a pamphlet out, his ideas

could be spread like a flame throughout a town or between provincial counties, or even between two or more colonies.

Aided by the printed word, a phenomenon took root in the soil of the court system in Great Britain which then spread to the English colonies. That phenomenon was the use of a *petition*. Before you jump to any assumptions, I should explain what I mean by a 'petition.' Present-day petitions are circulated with the goal of obtaining as many signatures as possible for the sole purpose of confirming that a large number of people (supposedly) agree with the topic of the petition. The petition of the 1700s, while being signed by as many people who wanted to, was not devised solely for the purpose of counting heads, per se. The primary purpose of a petition in that age, was to function as a vehicle for the submission of a request to some governing body. Now the act of petitioning a court was not new in the 1700s. In Great Britain during the 17th and 18th Centuries, any common individual was permitted to request an audience with the Court (or Parliament), and when granted, he would travel to the Court House and present his request directly to the Court official(s) face to face. He might submit, at that meeting, a handwritten document detailing the subject on which he desired action. A petition could be signed by any number of supporters, making it possible for a large group of individuals to present a request, although only one of them would actually appear before the governing body. The printing press assisted the practice of the use of the petition by helping to make its subject known to a large audience. Unlike a single handwritten document that was submitted to the governing body, and perhaps lost among the government red tape, with its subject known only by the petitioner and whomever else he chose to tell, the petition could be printed in a local newspaper to reach a larger audience and perhaps gain additional supporters.

Regarding newspapers, it might be noted that of all the products of the printing press, the newspaper was possibly the most useful means of communication besides face to face encounters. As compared to a broadside, the newspaper could contain any number of notices, covering the same unlimited number of subjects and/or opinions. The men who voiced their displeasure with the British

government found that a single article or advertisement in a newspaper would be louder and more far-reaching than any petition to the Court.

The *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, published in Philadelphia beginning in 1767 by a trio of associates: William Goddard, Joseph Galloway and Thomas Wharton, published many issues which carried articles advocating rebellion against the authority of Great Britain. John Dickinson's *Letters From A Farmer In Pennsylvania To The Inhabitants Of The British Colonies*, a series of 12 essays were published in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*. The *Letters* advocated opposition to the British Parliament's intimidating Acts by three successive means: legal petition, boycott of goods and by armed resistance if necessary. Articles denouncing the Stamp Act and supporting the Boston Tea Party were published in the pages of the *Chronicle*. Other newspapers, including the *Pennsylvania Journal* and the *Boston Gazette*, were noted for publishing articles which voiced

To the PEOPLE of ENGLAND.

**I**T is evident the British empire now trembles on the brink of ruin.—Civil war, confusion and destruction, are inevitable, if administration continue to invade the rights of the Americans; and therefore our most serious and attentive consideration should be applied to the great affair of restoring and preserving union and harmony between Britain and America. It might be demonstrated by a million of reasons, that Britain cannot long rule the Americans by mere power, and hold them in servile subjection. This continent is more than an hundred times larger than Great Britain; and according to the present increase of the people, in less than a century they will exceed fifty millions. Can it be supposed that this vast people will be slaves and vassals of tyrants in Britain? Surely no man of any consideration can entertain such a thought. But as distant danger does not affect ministerial men who “live by the hour,” and are eager in pursuit of fortunes and plunder, let us consider that *your danger* is near, and now even at the door. It is well known that (under Providence) *interest governs* all nations; and it is an important question, How can the colonies affect *your interest*, and the interest of *other nations*, for the grand purpose of securing the liberties of America? The answer is short, and convincing; the colonies will withhold their trade from *you*, and give it to *other nations*. This stroke of policy will be effectual and decisive; and as it is seen to be the only thing which will answer the grand purpose of preserving LIBERTY, it will be pursued with ardour, and persevered in with firmness. To demonstrate the practicability of this measure, let it be considered and seriously attended to; that the TRADE of America is a prize for which the commercial states will all contend, and embrace every opportunity to acquire, therefore by *this* will the Americans command respect, alliances, and the fleets of Europe.—British ships cannot block up all the ports of America, which are extended more than three thousand miles on the atlantic ocean, and are commodious for the commerce of the world. Such is the fertility of America, the people never can be starved into a submission to tyranny, by the modern scheme of *blocking up*; and their internal strength is greatly superior to any force that ever can be sent against them. They could at any time in the space of ten days assemble an army of fifty thousand men; and a great part of them experienced in war; the last war with Canada having disciplined vast numbers of men who are now qualified for any command; or any action. It is in the nature and common course of things, utterly impossible that Britain (or any other nation) should subdue the combined force of the Americans; she may injure and distress them for a short time, but they will at last rise superior to all her arts to deceive and efforts to subdue; and the day that crowns their liberty (if they are obliged to gain it by force) will seal her doom. But I will dwell no longer on the gloomy idea of Britain's fall. It is my warmest wish, next to the liberty of America, that she may live forever. And I will now attempt to point out the means by which her prosperity, and that of the whole empire, may be increased and made permanent.

To impose arbitrary government on any part of the empire, particularly America, which is so extensive and important a part, will destroy that *equilibrium* which is the *basis* of the whole, by forming a *separate interest*, and thereby take away all motives to preserve the union, in *those who are deprived of liberty*, which will cut the *bond of empire*, and like the once august Roman empire, it will be split into different kingdoms and commonwealths.—Therefore the equilibrium, equal liberty, must be preserved in every member of the great body, the first and essential principle of government. The empire standing upon these great principles of *equity and equality*, no just cause would ever exist for disunion between Britain and America; and the British dominions might, upon this basis of *justice and liberty*, extend farther and farther to the remotest regions of the earth; and Britain remain the centre of union, wealth, and splendor; reign sovereign of the ocean, and mistress of the world.—Reason and interest would be the cords of union, while all the colonies received nothing but justice and mercy from Britain, and they would then *love the parent country*, and glory (as they have done in time past) in her prosperity and magnificence; she would rise in proportion to the increase of the colonies; and the American navigation would be a growing nursery for seamen to man the British navy, as well as a source of wealth to support it. In short, while union and harmony are preserved between the two countries, no nation can ever vie with the *English*—and the blessings that would accrue to the empire from such a system of liberty and justice, cannot be numbered nor named they are so many and great!

ENGLISHMEN! you were once too generous and brave to enslave others, or be enslaved yourselves—may your ancient ardour for LIBERTY arise, and animate your bosom with passions godlike as your Sires!

CONSIDERATION.



American dissent. Perhaps one of the most ‘rebellious’ of the spate of rebel newspapers to appear on the scene was the *Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, published at Boston between 1770 and 1776 by Isaiah Thomas. An example of the *Spy's* ‘seditious’ form of articles is reproduced to the right.

On 16 December 1773, an advertisement appeared in one of the colonial newspapers published in New York City. It had been placed by the *Committee of the Association*. The advertisement stated:

*The Members of the Association of the Sons of Liberty, are requested to meet at the City-Hall at one o'Clock, To-morrow, (being Friday) on Business of the utmost Importance; ~ And every other Friend to the Liberties, and Trade of America, are hereby most cordially invited, to meet at the same Time and Place.*  
*The Committee of the Association,*  
*Thursday, New-York, 16th December, 1773.*

The ad transcribed above was dated at New York City on the same day that Samuel Adams would hold a meeting at the Old South Meeting House in Boston. That meeting resulted in a mob that boarded the British ship, *Dartmouth* and threw its cargo of chests of tea overboard. Two other ships carrying cargoes of tea, the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver* soon arrived in Boston Harbor. Eleven days later, an advertisement was placed in a Boston newspaper. It also called for any like-minded men to attend a meeting at the State-House:

*The Tea-Ship being arrived, every Inhabitant who wishes to preserve the Liberty of America, is desired to meet at the State-House, This Morning, precisely at TEN o'Clock, to advise what is best to be done on this alarming Crisis.*  
*Monday Morning, December 27, 1773.*

The revolutionary spirit that was growing in the hearts and minds of many different individuals throughout the colonies could ~ and indeed was ~ expressed in various printed forms. Printing had become the catalyst by which the growing *patriotic* spirit was being disseminated. The speed at which an idea could be distributed in the 1700s by way of newspapers, broadsides and other printed matter helped that idea to spread like fire, far and wide. Although that speed appears very slow to us today (being accustomed to radio, television, telephones and the Internet), it would probably have seemed quite fast in the 1700s.

Now, let's return to William Proctor, Robert Cluggage, Robert Hanna, George Wilson, William Lochry and William McConnel at Bedford in 1771. Reading the newspapers, broadsides and pamphlets of the day, those men,

and all of the others who had agreed to serve the inhabitants of the frontier county of Bedford as public servants, would have been aware of what was going on in the other counties of the colony of Pennsylvania and in the sister colonies. Not only would they have been aware of the Acts passed by the British Parliament, but they also would have heard of instances in which the Royal Governors dissolved the General Assemblies of both Massachusetts and Virginia: Massachusetts for having sent a circular letter protesting the colonists being taxed without being permitted to be represented in the Parliament, and Virginia for having approved of the letter.

It is interesting to contemplate on the manner that the legislative assemblies, sworn to uphold the dictates of the King, changed and, seemingly overnight, forswore those prior allegiances. One must know something about the nature of British politics which, of course, were as well American politics at the time. The British Parliament would be called into existence by the King and dissolved by the King. During the hiatus between Parliaments, the Members of Parliament went back to their farms and estates. Legal proceedings were suspended until the next Parliament was called. Likewise in the colonies, when the Royal Governors dissolved or suspended the provincial assemblies, the belief would have been that the members of the legislative body, whether it be the House of Burgesses in Virginia or the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, would simply go back to their homes and wait for the next official directive to be received from the Governor.

But as one harsh Act after another was passed by Parliament, the colonists felt that they could not put their feelings on hold until the next legislative session was called. The Americans chose to deviate from the status quo of the 18th Century political custom. When a Royal Governor dissolved the legislative body of a colony, some members of that body simply met on their own, often conducting their meetings at a local tavern or some other site not controlled by British troops.

The concept of the 'town meeting' in which any man could voice his opinion and be heard by his peers was popular, especially in the northern colonies. It had probably grown out of, or at least was influenced by, the erection of

liberty poles, around which anyone could speak. You did not need to be a member of the official legislative body of the colony to speak at a town meeting. And there is where the difference between this new 'legislative' body and the established legislature was clearly seen: while this new body may have included some official legislators (who held opinions contrary to the Royal Governor), it would not have included any who fully supported the Crown and Parliament.

Samuel Adams, in September of 1771, proposed the establishment of a network of small groups of men to engage in correspondence and the dissemination of seditious broadsides and pamphlets. In response, the *Committee of Correspondence* was created in Boston. The members of the Boston committee, chosen by the populace, included members of the General Assembly along with private citizens. Soon after, Committees of Correspondence were formed in at least fifty-eight other towns in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the network was created.

The network functioned directly and efficiently. Issues brought up and discussed at various of the town meetings would be drafted in the form of letters by the local Committee. Those letters would then be sent to the Boston Committee to be published in the newspapers or to be printed up as broadsides and pamphlets. In March 1773, the Virginia House of Burgesses sent out a request for all the other colonies to follow Massachusetts Bay's example. The other colonies began to set up their own networks of committees primarily at the county level. The Sons of Liberty now had a inter-colonial forum through which to express and share their ideas.

The assemblies of practically all of the colonies were of the opinion that a meeting of delegates from all the colonies to discuss the state of affairs should be held. The proposed meeting, variously known as a *convention* or a *congress*, was intended to achieve three objectives. The delegates planned to 1.) compose a statement of the rights the colonists felt they were entitled to, 2.) identify the Acts of Parliament which had violated those rights, and 3.) propose actions which would result in the repeal of the Acts. During the spring and summer of 1774, every colony except Georgia elected delegates to attend

a grand congress to be held at Philadelphia, the largest city at the time, and the one located in the center of the colonies. The delegates met "*in congress*" during September of 1774.

Although the objectives of the so-called First Continental Congress were not fully met, one of the things that came out of the discussions was a plan known as the *Continental Association*, which called for all the colonies to participate in a trade boycott. Those who would participate in the boycott would refuse to import British goods. They would also refuse to allow any American manufactures to be exported to any British port. The Association also suggested that all town and county courts throughout all of the colonies establish *Committees of Inspection and Observation* that would be charged with enforcing the trade boycott. By April 1775, Committees were active in all of the colonies.

Between the 12th of July 1774 and the 16th of May 1775, various counties throughout the Province of Pennsylvania set up Committees of Observation. Committees was set up in Cumberland County on 12 July 1774, in Berks County on 05 December 1774, in York County on 16 December 1774, in Chester County on 20 December 1774, in Northampton County on 21 December 1774, and in Washington and Westmoreland Counties on 16 May 1775.

Bedford County established a Committee of Observation in early 1775. The first act performed by the Bedford County Committee was the passage of a set of Resolves on 09 May 1775. The *Bedford County Resolves* pledged support for the patriotic cause, or in its own wording: "*in order to defend the cause of liberty now contending for.*" There were five members chosen to be part of that Committee: Samuel Davidson (a tanner), David Espy (a lawyer), George Funk (a tavern owner), Thomas Smith (a lawyer) and George Woods (a surveyor). Of this group, only Espy and Smith had studied law. But all of them could read, and they read the news coming from the other counties of Pennsylvania and the other colonies and, like the inhabitants of those other counties and colonies, they took matters into their own hands when they realized that *the British Parliament was not serving them* ~ which is supposed to be the function of a government!