



This is NewsLetter Issue No. One ~ For the year 2021

The Bedford County Resolves

This article was first published in the 3rd Quarter Newsletter of the then-Blair County Chapter for the year 1998. Some of you might remember reading it back then. I hope that you will find the subject as interesting now as you may have back then.

Anyone of elementary school age who pays attention in history class when the American Revolutionary War is being taught should learn of the 'Mecklenburg Resolves'. Signed on 31 May 1775, the list of resolutions entered into by the residents of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina have been celebrated as the first set of directives for the county residents to function outside of the laws of Great Britain. Counties across North Carolina, and indeed throughout all of the British colonies in North America, adopted their own set of *Resolves*. While they were not the first set of *Resolves* to be adopted in the British Colonies, the *Mecklenburg Resolves* are unique in that they overtly called for independence from Great Britain. Most of the other *Resolves*, including those adopted by Bedford County, only hinted at independence from the Mother Country.

All across the colony of Pennsylvania, Committees of Correspondence for her eleven counties adopted their own sets of *Resolves*:

resolutions directing the residents to form themselves into militia organizations.

Transcribed in the published *Pennsylvania Archives*, are the *Resolves* of every county except Bedford. No historian, including Floyd Hoenstine, made mention of the county's *Resolves* or the lack thereof. The subject of why Bedford County had apparently not adopted a set of *Resolves* was not discussed in any book on the history of the county. The fact of the matter was that it was not a case of the county not having adopted its own *Resolves*. Rather, the *Bedford County Resolves* had been overlooked, 'lost' so to speak, and were relatively unknown by historians of Bedford County for centuries.

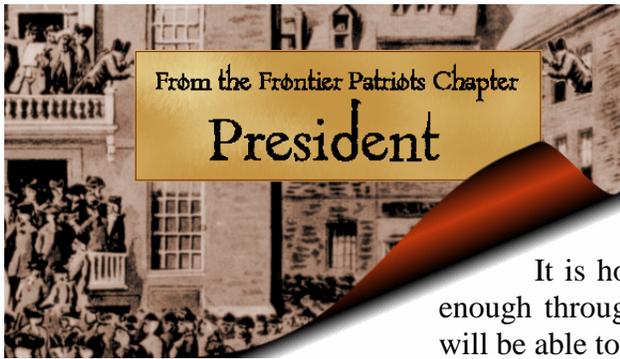
The *Bedford County Resolves* were included in a letter sent by David Espy, the clerk of the Bedford County Committee of Correspondence to the Pennsylvania Committee at Philadelphia. The letter was dated 9 May 1775 ~ just twenty days after the 'shot heard 'round the world' was fired at Lexington. The *Resolves* were only transcribed in the *American Archives* edited by Peter Force in the 1830s.

The *Resolves* give evidence of Bedford County's intention to support the 'Patriot Cause.'

The Bedford County Resolves

- Resolved, That this County will immediately form themselves into Military Associations, and prepare themselves, in order to defend their lives, liberties, and properties, from any illegal attempts made against them.*
- Resolved, That each Township in this County shall be immediately notified to assemble themselves at a certain day and place most convenient for that purpose, and then and there, by ballot or otherwise, choose Officers in their respective Townships.*
- Resolved, That the said Officers, when chosen, shall make out a Roll, and each man shall subscribe his name in said Roll; and that the Captain shall immediately transmit a copy thereof to the Committee of Correspondence at Bedford.*
- Resolved, That the Committee of this County shall purchase all the Powder and Lead in any store that may be had within the said County, and have the same put up in some safe Magazine in the Town of Bedford, for the use of the said Soldiers; and that each Company shall, by subscription, make up a proportionable part of the same; which Ammunition shall not be distributed without the orders of the Committee of Correspondence of the said County, or until it shall be thought necessary by this Committee or a majority of them.*
- Resolved, That each Company in this County shall use their utmost endeavors to purchase or provide all the Ammunition they can, so that no person in the said Company shall have less than one pound of Powder, and Lead in proportion.*
- Resolved, That as soon as the said Companies are formed, they and each of them shall be subject to military regulations and discipline, in the same manner as any other of His Majesty's Troops are (corporeal punishment only excepted.)*
- Resolved, That in case any person or persons in this County shall refuse to subscribe himself in a roll of some Company in the said County, in order to defend the cause of liberty now contending for, or by any ways or means whatever discourage or disunite the said Associations, that then he or they so offending shall be immediately reported by some of the officers of their respective Townships, to the Committee of Correspondence at Bedford, in order that such steps may be taken as by the said Committee may be thought most prudent; and that, in the mean time, no person or persons within the said County shall, directly or indirectly, have any dealing or commerce, by either buying or selling, borrowing, or lending to or with any of the said offenders.*
- Resolved, That all persons within this County that are not at present provided with Guns, Swords, or Tomahawks, in case of ability shall provide for themselves, and in case of inability, that the Captain of each Company shall immediately transmit their names, or their number, to the Committee of Correspondence at Bedford, that proper measures may be taken in order to provide for them.*
- Resolved, That each Township shall meet and choose their Officers, and make return agreeable to the above Resolves, within the space of ten days from this date.*





The next meeting of the Frontier Patriots Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will be held at the Hoss's Restaurant at 4308 Business 220, Bedford on Saturday, 20 March 2021 starting at 12 Noon.

It is hoped that the Covid-19 coronavirus will be controlled enough through the antiviral vaccinations during this year that we will be able to meet without restrictions. We also hope that our many Compatriot members of the Frontier Patriots Chapter who reside in the south-central Pennsylvania region will join us at our Quarterly Meetings. Also, please note that the calendar distributed previously that listed the Quarterly Meetings for 2021 require a change. The 3rd Quarter Meeting will need to be moved to the following Saturday, 18 September 2021.



Fascine Knife



A bundle of sticks was known, in the 1700s, as a fascine. The dictionary definition [from the *Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, published by N. Bailey in 1793, that is] of a fascine was “*Bavins bound up in bundles, which, mixed with Earth, serve to fill up Ditches; make BreastWorks, &c.*” A ‘*bavin*’ was described as “*brush-faggots*”. And finally, a ‘*brush-faggot*’ was described as a ‘*small stick*.’

So what is the point of my devoting an article to a bundle of sticks? The point is that fascines were used to beef up the defenses of breastworks, especially those of redoubts. When a redoubt was constructed, the

ground that was dug out of the middle and deposited on the sides to form the walls tended to be loose and capable of collapsing easily. The bundles of sticks would be laid horizontal and fastened into the ground by stakes. One bundle upon another would be stacked along the ground to form a covering to the earthen walls.

The knife that was used to cut the small sticks was called a *fascine knife*. It was sometimes called a *bill-hook*. As shown in the example, a fascine knife usually had a curved end. The ‘inside’ edge of the curve was the sharpened edge. Like a sickle or scythe, a man would swipe the knife at a sapling and with a curving, upward motion easily cut the sapling. The curved end of the knife prevented it from slipping in the act of cutting.

Fascine knives were issued to the soldiers mainly for engineering purposes, *i.e.* the cutting of saplings and branches to make fascine bundles. But they could also be employed during a battle in close contact fighting.

Arthur St. Clair

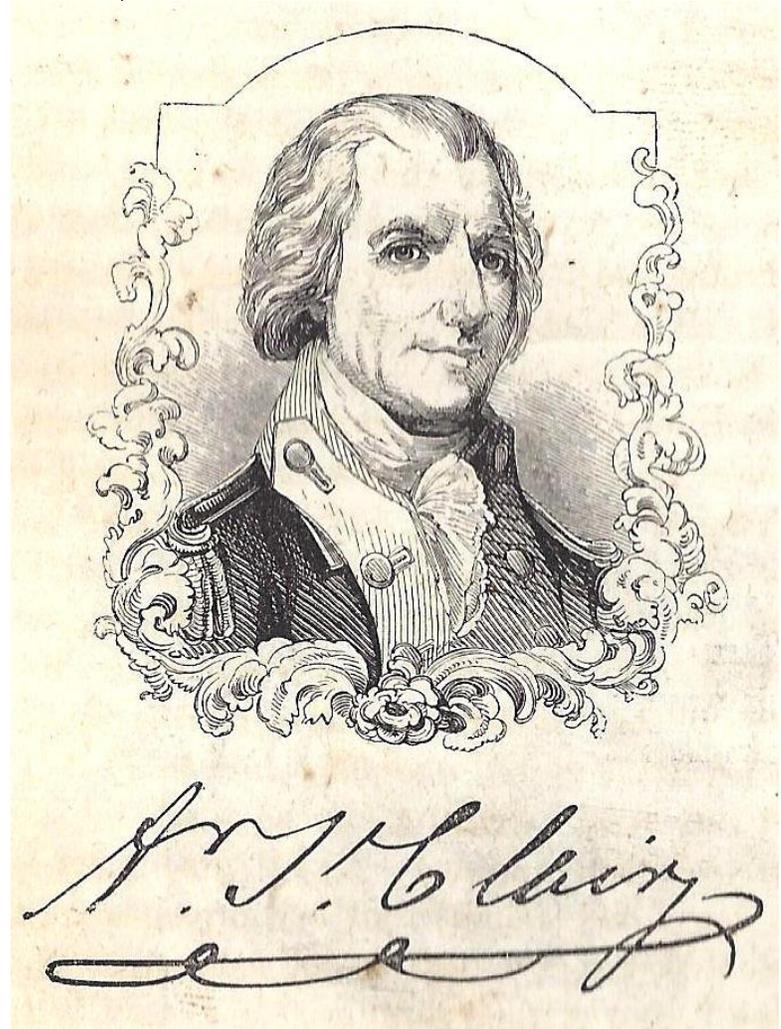
Arthur St. Clair was born at Thurso, Scotland on 23 March 1734. He immigrated to the North American British Colonies in 1759. He served under General Wolfe at Quebec in that year and 1760. In 1762, St. Clair resigned his commission and moved southward to the town of Bedford. St. Clair, being a surveyor, intended to make a living as a surveyor on the Pennsylvania frontier. In 1764 with the French and Indian War over, St. Clair was assigned to the command of Fort Ligonier.

Arthur St. Clair became involved in the county government of Bedford County when it was erected out of Cumberland County in 1771. He started out by serving as a Justice of the Peace while the region was part of Cumberland County. He then served in four positions: Prothonotary, Recorder of Deeds, Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas and Register of the Orphan's Court.

The first Bedford County court house, constructed of logs, did not have room for court offices, so Thomas Smith allowed St. Clair to set up an office in the basement room of his stone dwelling on Pitt Street. That stone house was just recently built, but it was very sturdy and twenty years later it was sold to David Espy. In 1795, when President George Washington came to Bedford County with a Federal Army, he stayed in the second floor of that stone house that still stands today in Bedford Borough.

In 1773 the western half of Bedford County broke off to form Westmoreland County.

Having the experience of working in the court system for Bedford County, when Westmoreland



was created, St. Clair filled the Prothonotary position.

Between 2 February 1787 and 21 January 1788, Arthur St. Clair served as the President of the Congress. Arthur St. Clair died on 31 August 1818.

Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <http://www.motherbedford.com/FrontierPatriots.htm>

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