

put in *Wiltsey's* store a number of chests and trunks, containing (as he said) officers' baggage, for which he took *Wiltsey's* receipt. He had a pass from General *Schuyler* to go to *Fredericksburgh*, in *Dutchess County*, with his baggage, which he showed *Wiltsey*, and applied for assistance to take his chests, &c., there; but being disappointed in getting teams for the purpose, they lay some days in the store; in which time, some little boys, playing in the store, discovered that one of the chests, which had been nailed down and lashed with a rope, but had partly got open, contained fire-arms, of which they acquainted Mr. *Wiltsey*, who immediately gave the Committee of the Precinct notice thereof. The Committee met, opened the chest, found it contained thirteen officers' pieces, with a paper, on which was written the owners' names, fastened to each; seven broadswords, and some pistols. The Committee ordered all the chests (nine in number) to their Chairman's house, about ten miles back in the country, where they now are, as yet unopened; but from their extraordinary weight, it is probable they are all filled with arms. The trunks which contained baggage only are not detained—I believe taken away by *Campbell*. The Committee have appointed to meet and open all the chests on *Monday* next, and have summoned *Campbell* to attend them. In this I fear they have been over-prudent, for if guilty he will fly for it—it is reported, and I believe, he has already.

It will be out of my power to attend the Committee to open the chests, as my business calls me to *Kingston* (forty miles distant) on that day. I have, therefore, sent the Chairman your order to me, enclosed in a letter, of which I now send you a copy. And as he is an active man, warmly engaged in his country's cause, I doubt not but everything will be done, as well for securing the arms as *Campbell*, if necessary; and as soon as I receive their report, I will transmit it to you.

*Fredericksburgh* is a neighbourhood in which several *Scotch* half-pay officers (of course disaffected persons) live; among the rest *Menos*, mentioned in the letter you showed me. I cannot learn with certainty that he is gone off, though it is confidently said many persons in that place have lately absconded.

I am, with the highest esteem, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE CLINTON.

To His Excellency General *Washington*.

JOHN COLLINS TO ADMIRAL HOPKINS.

Newport, April 5, 1776.

DEAR SIR: I congratulate you on the success of your cruise with the Continental fleet; and hope, nay, expect to see the day when the *American* fleets will give laws on the *Atlantick* Ocean. It will give me great pleasure to see your fleet riding in the harbour of *Newport*. The present motions in this town, I make no doubt, you are well informed of. We received with joy the ten cannon you sent us, and expect to get them mounted before this week is out, in proper forts and batteries. We have ten of our old twenty-four and eighteen-pounders mounted, and two that you sent us; and hope you will send as many more as you conveniently can.

I am, with great regard, your humble servant,

JOHN COLLINS.

To *Ezekiel Hopkins*, Esq., Admiral of the Continental Fleet, *New-London*.

PRESENTMENTS OF THE GRAND JURY AT GEORGETOWN, SOUTH-CAROLINA.

I. When a People, ever dutiful and affectionate to that system of Government formed for their happiness, and under which they had long lived, find that, by the baseness and corruption of their rulers, those laws which were intended as the guardians of their sacred and unalienable rights, are impiously perverted into instruments of oppression; and, in violation of every social compact, and the ties of common justice, every means is adopted by those whom they instituted to govern and protect them, to enslave and destroy them: human nature and the laws of *God* justify their employing those means for redress which self-preservation dictates. It is with the most joyful sensibility we

behold this once happy country, amidst all the evil attempts of her *British* enemies to enslave and oppress her, and whilst she is involved in all the tumults of war, still fix that system for which she is contending, by forming a Constitution of Government the most equitable and desirable that human imagination could invent, thereby convincing the world of the justice of her intentions, and her own regard to the rights of mankind. The present Constitution of Government, formed by the late Congress of this Colony, promises to its inhabitants every happy effect which can arise from society. Equal and just in its principles, wise and virtuous in its ends; we now see every hope of future liberty, safety, and happiness confirmed to ourselves and our posterity, and the possession of which our own virtuous perseverance must render perpetual. Every good citizen will joyfully exult at those considerations; and when he finds himself living in a community where virtue alone is sovereign, where tyranny is banished, and every system of oppression held as detestable, earnestly endeavour, regardless of every danger, to support these glorious advantages against any hand that dares to molest them. And should there be a wretch so lost to every humane principle, whose heart but harbours the least dissatisfaction in such a situation, we hold him as unworthy the society of men.

II. We cannot but express our unfeigned satisfaction in the choice of the present public officers acting under our Constitution, the method of their appointment being founded on the strictest justice and impartiality, the duration of their power being consistent with every principle of safety to the people, and the characters of such as are now in appointment so confided in from their well-known personal merits.

III. When we reflect on the general harmony which now prevails in this part of the Colony, and are sensible how soon the good effect of our present Government must appear to every one, we promise to ourselves the happiness of soon seeing this oppressed and much injured Colony enjoying a state of freedom and felicity unknown before.

And lastly: We beg leave to return our sincere thanks to the Honourable Mr. Justice *Matheus* for his truly patriotic and spirited charge delivered to us at the opening of this session, and to request that these our sentiments and thanks be printed in the public papers.

BENJAMIN YOUNG, *Foreman*.

May 5, 1776.

VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY DISSOLVED.

Williamsburgh, May 10, 1776.

Last *Monday, May 6*, forty-five Members of the House of Burgesses met at the Capitol pursuant to their last adjournment; but it being their opinion that the people could not now be legally represented according to the ancient Constitution, which has been subverted by the King, Lords and Commons of *Great Britain*, and consequently dissolved, they unanimously dissolved themselves accordingly.

The same day, the General Convention of Delegates from the Counties and Corporations in this Colony met at the Capitol.

INDEPENDENCE IN BUCKINGHAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

To CHARLES PATTERSON and JOHN CABELL, *Gentlemen Delegates for the County of BUCKINGHAM, now in General Convention*:

*The Address and Instructions of the Freeholders of the said County.*

As you were elected and deputed by us to fill the most difficult and important places that the Representatives of this County were ever appointed to act in, we cannot, in justice to ourselves and posterity, forbear to give some instructions concerning the discharge of your great trust. In this we have the example of many; but would not tie you down in a manner too strict and positive. Though a general confidence in your honesty and wisdom may be required; yet, in some great and leading questions, it may not be unnecessary to take the sense of your constituents: we give you ours in the plainest, easiest, and best method it can be collected. If it does not agree with the general opinion, we trust, at least, it will be pardonable. Actuated by a warm and sincere regard for the interests and rights of mankind,