

article mentioned in the warrant, Voted, that if the *American* Congress should, in their wisdom, declare independent of *Great Britain*, then they, (the inhabitants of this town,) with their lives and fortunes, do solemnly engage to support them in the same.

SCITUATE, PLYMOUTH COUNTY.

*Instructions to NATHAN CUSHING, Esq., Representative of the Town of SCITUATE, June 4, 1776.*

The inhabitants of this town being called together on the recommendation of our General Assembly, to signify our minds on the great point of independence on *Great Britain*, think fit to instruct you on that head. The Ministry of that kingdom having formed a design of subjecting the Colonies to a distant, external, and absolute power, in all cases whatsoever, wherein the Colonies have not, nor, in the nature of things, can have any share by representation, have for a course of years past exerted their utmost art and endeavour to press the same plan, so destructive to both countries, into execution; but finding it, through the noble and virtuous opposition of the sons of freedom, impracticable, by means of mere political artifice and corruption, they have at length had a fatal recourse to a standing army, so repugnant to the nature of a free Government, to fire and sword, to bloodshed and devastation, calling in the aid of foreign troops, as well as endeavouring to stir up the savages of the wilderness to exercise their barbarities upon us; being determined by all appearances, if practicable, to extirpate the *Americans* from the face of the earth, if possible, unless they tamely resign the rights of humanity, and to re-people this once happy country with the ready sons of vassalage, if such can be found: We, therefore, apprehending such a subjection utterly inconsistent with the just rights and blessings of society, unanimously instruct you to endeavour that our Delegates in Congress be informed, in case that Representative body of the Continent should think fit to declare the Colonies independent of *Great Britain*, of our readiness and determination to assist, with our lives and fortunes, in support of that (as we apprehend) necessary measure.

Touching other matters, we trust in your discretion, fidelity, and zeal, for the publick welfare, to propose and forward all such measures as you shall apprehend may tend to our necessary defence in the present threatening aspect of affairs, or to promoting the internal peace, order, and good Government of this Colony.

WRENTHAM, NORFOLK COUNTY.

June 5, 1776.

At a general Town-Meeting of the Freeholders, and other inhabitants of this Town, being warned, qualified, and assembled as the law directs, at the publick Meeting-House in the First Precinct in this Town:

*To Messrs. BENJAMIN GUILD, JOSEPH HAWS, and Doctor EBENEZER DAGGETT, chosen to represent this Town the ensuing year:*

GENTLEMEN: We, your constituents, in full town-meeting, June 5th, 1776, give you the following Instructions, viz:

Whereas tyranny and oppression, a little more than a century and a half ago, obliged our forefathers to quit their peaceful habitations and seek an asylum in this distant land, amidst a howling wilderness, surrounded with savage enemies, and destitute of almost every convenience of life, was their unhappy situation. But such was their zeal for the common rights of mankind, that they, under the smiles of Divine Providence, surmounted every difficulty, and in a little time were in the exercise of civil Government under the charter of the Crown of *Great Britain*. But after some years had passed, and the Colonies had become of some importance, new troubles began to arise: the same spirit which caused them to leave their native land still pursued them, joined by designing men among themselves. Letters began to be written against the Government, and the first Charter soon after destroyed. In this situation, some years passed before another Charter could be obtained; and although many of the rights and privileges of the first Charter were abridged by the last, yet in that situation the Government has been tolerably quiet until the year 1763, since which the same spirit of oppression has risen up. Letters

by divers ill-minded persons have been written against the Government, in consequence of which divers acts of the *British* Parliament have been made, mutilating and destroying the Charter, and wholly subversive of the Constitution. Fleets and armies have been sent to enforce them, and at length a civil war has commenced, and the sword is drawn in our lap, and the whole United Colonies involved in one common cause. The repeated and humble petitions of the people have been wantonly rejected with disdain. The Prince we once adored has commissioned the instruments of his hostile oppressions to lay waste our dwellings with fire and sword, to rob us of our property, and wantonly to stain the land with the blood of its innocent inhabitants. He has entered into treaties with the most cruel nations, to hire an army of mercenaries to subjugate the Colonies to his cruel and arbitrary purposes. In short, all hopes of an accommodation are entirely at an end. A reconciliation has become as dangerous as it is absurd. A recollection of past injuries will naturally kindle and keep alive the flames of jealousy. We, your constituents, therefore, think that to be subject to or dependant on the Crown of *Great Britain* would not only be impracticable, but unsafe and dangerous to the State. The inhabitants of this town, therefore, in full town-meeting, unanimously instruct and direct you to give your vote, if the honourable *American* Congress (in whom we place the highest confidence under *God*) should think necessary for the safety of the United Colonies to declare them independent on *Great Britain*, that we, your constituents, with our lives and fortunes, will most cheerfully support them in the measure.

Touching the internal policy of this Colony, it has been found, by long experience, a great charge to a great number of the towns in the Colony that they have to go to but one town in each County for the Probate of Wills and the Register of Deeds. We, your constituents, are of opinion, that each office would be more to the advantage of the people, were they kept in each town, under suitable directions. Therefore, we, your constituents, instruct you to use your influence in the General Court to obtain an act enabling the several towns in this Colony to keep each of said offices within the limits of the same.

Gentlemen, not doubting your zeal and abilities in the common cause, and your firm attachment to peace and good order, and in the same confidence in your sincere attachment to the publick weal, we readily submit all other matters of publick moment that may require your consideration to your own wisdom and discretion.

HANOVER, PLYMOUTH COUNTY.

PLYMOUTH, ss:

At a legal Town-Meeting held at *Hanover*, on the 6th day of *June*, 1776, agreeable to a resolve of the honourable House of Representatives of the Colony of *Massachusetts-Bay*, relative to advising the person or persons who should represent them in the General Court, whether, that if the Honourable Congress should, for the safety of the Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, they, the inhabitants, would solemnly engage, with their lives and fortunes, to support them in the measure:

*Voted, unanimously*, To instruct and inform their Representatives, that if the honourable Congress should, for the safety of said Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, that they, the inhabitants, will engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure.

TYRINGHAM, BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

Pursuant of a resolve of the House of Representatives of the Colony of *Massachusetts-Bay*, passed June 7th, 1776, the Freeholders and inhabitants of the Town of *Tyringham*, being duly notified, assembled on *Wednesday*, the 26th day of said *June*, and after deliberately considering the state of the Colonies with regard to their being any longer subject to the Kingdom of *Great Britain*,

*Voted, unanimously*, That if the honourable Continental Congress should think fit to declare the Colonies independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, that they, the inhabitants of *Tyringham*, were ready, with their lives and fortunes, to support the measure.