

ALFORD, BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

At a meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of *Alford*, legally assembled at the house of *Ensign Simeon Harlbut*, in said town, on *Friday*, the 7th day of *June*, A. D. 1776, at four of the clock in the afternoon on said day, to consider and act on the subject of independence, as the town should think fit, in pursuance of advice from the Great and General Court of the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*:

The two following Resolves being laid before the town, in a full meeting, and being separately put, they each of them passed unanimously:

Resolved, (as the opinion of the Town,) That by a number of Acts and Laws made and passed by both Houses of the *British Parliament* in the reign of *George III*, and the hostilities commenced in support of said Acts and Laws, the union and connection between *Great Britain* and the United Colonies of *North America* are, on the part of *Britain*, cut in sunder, and that the United Colonies ought to take forfeiture.

Passed in the affirmative, *nem. con.*

Therefore, *Resolved*, That should the honourable the Continental Congress declare the United Colonies of *North America* independent in all respects of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, this Town will support the measure with their lives and fortunes.

Passed in the affirmative, *nem. con.*

NORWICH, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

At a meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of *Norwich*, legally assembled, on the 7th of *June*, 1776:

Voted, (on the article in the warrant respecting independence from *Great Britain*.) in case the honourable Continental Congress and the body of the United Colonies think best to declare independence from *Great Britain*, the Town of *Norwich* votes to join to support and defend the same.

PALMER, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

At a very full meeting of the inhabitants of *Palmer*, legally met at the publick Meeting-House, on *Monday*, the 17th day of *June*, 1776, at one o'clock in the afternoon. The meeting being opened, Mr. *Robert Farrell* was chosen Moderator, and then proceeded and voted the following Instructions to the Representative of this Town now at the General Assembly of this Colony, as the sentiments of this Town:

That whereas the Court of *Great Britain* hath, by sundry Acts of Parliament, assumed the power of legislation for the Colonies in all cases whatsoever, without the consent of the inhabitants; have likewise exercised the assumed power for raising a revenue in the Colonies without their consent: We cannot justly call that our own which others may, when they please, take from us against our will. Have likewise appointed a new set of officers to superintend these revenues, wholly unknown in the Charter, and by their Commissioners invested with powers altogether unconstitutional and destructive to the security which we have a right to enjoy. Fleets and Armies have been introduced to support these unconstitutional officers in collecting these unconstitutional revenues; have altered the Charter of this Colony, and thereby overthrown the Constitution; together with many other grievous acts of Parliament, too grievous to be borne. The peaceable inhabitants being alarmed at such repeated inroads on the Constitution, and gigantick strides of despotick power over the Colonies, the Colonies petitioned the King for redress of grievances; finding that to fail, petitioned generally, begging as children to a father to be heard and relieved; but all to no purpose, the petitions being treated with almost contempt. The United Colonies, finding that no redress could be had from *Great Britain*, unitedly agreed to an opposition in the most peaceable way they could contrive, being willing to try every peaceable measure that could possibly be invented, rather than break with *Great Britain*. *Great Britain*, being bent on her favourite scheme of enslaving the Colonies, declared them Rebels, and treated them as such. The Colonies, being driven to a state of despair of the least relief from them, were obliged, by the law of self-preservation, to take up arms in their own defence,

meaning to use them only as such; but the dispute has arisen to so great a height that it is impossible for the Colonies ever to be joined with *Great Britain* again with the least security and safety to themselves or posterity. We, the inhabitants of this town, do believe it absolutely necessary for the safety of the United Colonies to be independent from *Great Britain*, and declare themselves entirely a separate State, as we can see no alternative but inevitable ruin or independence. But as there is a General Congress of wise and good men, who sit at the helm of affairs, consulting measures which will be most for the safety and prosperity of the whole, and have the means of intelligence and information in their hands, submit the whole affair to their wise consideration and determination; and if they shall unite in a separation from *Great Britain*, we do unanimously determine and declare we will support them with our lives and fortunes. We do direct the Representative of this Town to lay these votes before the honourable General Assembly of this Colony, to enable them to communicate our sentiments to the honourable Continental Congress.

ACTON, MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

At a meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of *Acton*, legally assembled, on the 14th day of *June*, 1776, the following Instructions were given to the Representative of this Town:

To Mr. MARK WHITE.

SIR: Our not being favoured with the resolution of the late honourable House of Representatives, calling upon the several towns in this Colony to express their minds with respect to the important question of *American Independence*, is the occasion of our not expressing our minds sooner; but we cheerfully embrace this opportunity to instruct you on that important question. The subverting our Constitution, the many injuries and unheard-of barbarities which these Colonies have received from *Great Britain*, confirm us in the opinion that the present age will be deficient in their duty to *God*, to their posterity, and themselves, if they do not establish an *American Republick*. This is the only form of Government we wish to see established. But we mean not to dictate. We freely submit this interesting affair to the wisdom of the honourable Continental Congress, who we trust are guided and directed in these important affairs by the Supreme Governour of the world; and we entreat you, sir, to give them the strongest assurances that, if they should declare *America* to be a free and independent Republick, your constituents will defend the measure with their lives and fortunes.

We further entreat you that you do nothing to subvert the laws concerning the settling and maintaining Gospel ministers; but, on the contrary, that you do all you can to uphold them in their full power.

BEDFORD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

At a general Town-Meeting, legally assembled, on the 17th day of *June*, A. D. 1776, the following article was considered, and acted upon, viz:

A resolve of the late House of Representatives, passed *May 10*, 1776, that the inhabitants of each town in the Colony ought, in full meeting, warned for that purpose, to advise the person who should be selected to represent them in the next General Court, whether, should the honourable Congress, for the safety of the said Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, then vote that we, the inhabitants of the Town of *Bedford*, will solemnly engage, with our lives and fortunes, to support them in the measure.

MURRAYFIELD, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

June 17, 1776.

At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of *Murrayfield*, regularly assembled, on the third article in the warrant with regard to Independency from *Great Britain*:

Voted, (in a nearly full meeting,) That, under the present circumstances of the Thirteen United Colonies, and the treatment of *Great Britain* towards *America*, we view it necessary, and are willing, to a man, to be declared an

independent State, whenever the honourable Continental Congress shall judge best.

LEVERETT, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

Leverett, June 18, 1776.

Agreeable to a resolve of the late House of Representatives, passed *May 10, 1776*, this Town met, on due warning, for that purpose; and, taking into consideration the important resolve, viz: Whether, should the honourable Congress, for the safety of the said Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, they (the said inhabitants) will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure?—being put to vote, unanimously voted in the affirmative.

GAGEBOROUGH, BRISTOL COUNTY.

June 19, 1776.

At a meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of *Gageborough*, agreeable to a resolve of the House of Representatives, of *June 7, 1776*, requesting the several Towns in this Colony to show their sentiments respecting the Independence of the Colonies:

Mr. STEPHEN WARREN, *Moderator*.

Resolved, nem. con., That, if the honourable Congress, agreeable to the earnest desire of this Town, for the safety of the Colonies, shall declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, they (the inhabitants) will cheerfully, to the utmost of their power, support them in the measure.

NATICK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

At a meeting of the Town of *Natick*, *June 20, 1776*, legally warned, in consequence of a resolve of the late House of Representatives being laid before the Town, setting forth their sense of the obligations that lie upon every town in this Colony solemnly to engage to support with their lives and fortunes the honourable Continental Congress, should said Congress, for the safety of the Colonies, come into the measure of declaring themselves independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, it was unanimously

Voted, That, in consideration of the many acts of the *British* Parliament, passed at divers sessions of the same, within about thirteen years past, relating to said Colonies, especially those within the two or three last years, by which every idea of moderation, justice, humanity, and Christianity are entirely laid aside, and those principles and measures adopted and pursued which would disgrace the most unenlightened and uncivilized tribe of aboriginal natives in the most interior parts of this extensive continent; and, also, in consequence of the glaring impropriety, incapacity, and fatal tendency, of any State whatever, at the distance of three thousand miles, to legislate for these Colonies, which at the same time are so numerous, so knowing, and capable of legislating; or to have a negative upon those laws which they, in their respective Assemblies, and by their united representation in General Congress, shall, from time to time, want and establish for themselves; and upon divers other considerations, which, for brevity's sake, we omit to mention,—we, the inhabitants of *Natick*, in town-meeting assembled, do hereby declare, agreeable to the tenor of the aforementioned resolve, that, should the honourable Continental Congress declare these *American* Colonies independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, we will, with our lives and fortunes, join with the other inhabitants of this Colony, and with those of the other Colonies, in supporting them in such measure, which we look upon to be both important and necessary, and which, if we may be permitted to suggest our opinion, the sooner it is come into the fewer difficulties we shall have to contend with, and the grand objects of peace, liberty, and safety, will be more likely speedily to be restored and established in our once happy land.

TOPSFIELD, ESSEX COUNTY.

At a legal Town-meeting held in *Topsfield*, by adjournment, *June 21, 1776*, the Town voted the following Instructions:

To Mr. JOHN GOULD, *Representative of Topsfield*.

SIR: A resolution of the honourable House of Repre-

sentatives, calling upon the several towns in this Colony to express their minds with respect to *American* independence of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, is the occasion of our giving you instructions; this being the greatest and most important question that ever came before this town. A few years ago, sir, such a question would have put us into a surprise, and, we apprehend, would have been treated with the utmost contempt. We then looked on ourselves happy in being subjects of the King of *Great Britain*. It being our forefathers' native country, we looked up unto them as our parent State; and we have always looked upon it as our duty, as well as our interest, to defend and support the honour of the Crown of *Great Britain*, and we have always freely done it, both with our lives and fortunes—counting ourselves happy when in the strictest union and connection with our parent State. But the scene is now changed; our sentiments are now altered. She who was called our mother country and parent State, has now, without any just cause, or injury done by these Colonies, become their greatest enemy. The unprovoked injuries these Colonies have received; the unjustifiable and unconstitutional claims that have been made on the Colonies by the Court of *Great Britain*, to force us, and take away our substance from us, and that at any time, or for any use, that they please, without our consent, and the prosecuting these their claims, have been cruel and unjust to the highest degree.

The whole conduct of the Court of *Great Britain*, and the fallacious conduct of their Governours appointed and sent into these Colonies, are so well known, and have been, by much abler hands, set forth in such a clear, plain, and true light, we think it needless to enumerate any further particulars. For these reasons, sir, as well as many others that may be mentioned, we are confirmed in the opinion that the United Colonies will be greatly wanting in their duty, both to the great Governour of the Universe, to themselves, and posterity, if independence of the Kingdom of *Great Britain* is not declared, as soon as may be; these being our sentiments—but we would not be understood that we mean to dictate. Leaving that momentous affair to the well-known wisdom, prudence, justice, and integrity, of that honourable body the Continental Congress, under whose direction it more immediately belongs, and in respect to a form of government for the future, we take it that belongs to an after question; and we could wish that no Court nor Congress on this continent might spend their time in debating about forms and ceremonies, equal or unequal representation in Court, at present. As innovations are always dangerous, we heartily wish that the ancient rules in the Charter, which this Province has been so much contending for, might be strictly adhered to, until such time as the whole of the people of this Colony have liberty to express their sentiments in respect to that affair as fully as they have in the case of independence; for we are full in the opinion that the sentiments of the people in general are never fully collected by the vote or opinion of a few persons met together, appointed, when they descend into matters of great importance that are wholly new, especially when the whole of the people are concerned therein.

Having thus freely spoken our sentiments in respect to independence, &c., we now instruct you, sir, to give the honourable the Continental Congress the strongest assurance that if, for the safety of the United Colonies, they shall declare *America* to be independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, your constituents will support and defend the measure with their lives and fortunes, to the utmost of their power.

SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

At a full meeting of the inhabitants of *Southampton*, met at their Meeting-House, on *Friday, June 21, 1776*, respecting being independent of *Great Britain*, it was as follows unanimously

Voted, That if the honourable Congress should, for the safety of the said Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, we (the inhabitants) will engage with our lives and fortunes to support them in the measure.

NORTHBRIDGE, WORCESTER COUNTY.

At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of *Northbridge*, held