

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

June 25, 1776, it was unanimously voted to support the Continental Congress with their lives and fortunes, if they should declare the United Colonies independent of *Great Britain*.

—  
WILLIAMSTOWN, BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

June 24, 1776.

At a legal Town-meeting of this town, held on this day, for the following purposes, the following motion was made and put to vote, viz: Whether, should the honourable Congress, for the safety of the Colonies, declare them independent of *Great Britain*, the inhabitants of this town will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure?

Passed in the affirmative, *nem. con.*

—  
BARNSTABLE, BARNSTABLE COUNTY.

At a Town-meeting held at *Barnstable*, June 25, 1776:

The question being put, agreeable to the Resolve of the General Court, Whether, if the Continental Congress should judge expedient to declare the United Colonies independent, they, the inhabitants of the Town of *Barnstable* would support the measure at the hazard of life and estate? It passed in the negative.

Upon which a number of respectable inhabitants, whose names are underwritten, judging such a procedure would have a tendency to disunite the Colonies, and to injure the cause of their country, did at said meeting publicly protest against it, hoping thereby to avoid the imputation of acquiescence in so dishonourable a measure.

JOSEPH OTIS,	FREEMAN PARKER,
THOMAS ANNABLE,	B. BAKER,
BENJAMIN SMITH,	NATHAN BASSETT,
ZACCHEUS HOWLAND,	DAVID SMITH,
EBENEZER LOTHROP,	JOB HOWLAND,
JOSEPH JENKINS,	JAMES DAVIS,
JOSEPH SMITH,	NATHANIEL HOWLAND.
JOHN CROCKER, JR.,	

—  
Barnstable, June 26, 1776.

We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the Town of *Barnstable*, protest against the proceedings of said town, at their meeting held on *Tuesday*, 25th of *June* instant, respecting the giving their Representative instructions with regard to the independency of the Colonies, as it was recommended to the several towns in this Colony, by way of resolve, from the honourable House of Representatives; and as a vote was put in said meeting to know whether the town would proceed to give any instructions to their Representatives, agreeable to the aforesaid recommendation; which was carried in the negative.

And judging it to be our duty to protest against said vote, we do it for the following reason: We think such a measure as proposed in said resolve to be the most salutary that can be gone into for the safety and well-being of the Colonies, under our present oppressed situation. And as it is the duty of every individual to give his voice in favour of the aforesaid recommendation, in case the honourable Continental Congress see cause to declare these Colonies entirely independent, we are ready and willing to stand by such a declaration (if it should take place) to the utmost of our power, with our lives and estates; and being very unwilling that the aforesaid vote should be passed over in silence, for fear of offending our own consciences, in being thought to acquiesce in so strange a vote of the town, and of offending our countrymen and brethren in other towns who may go into contrary measures, entirely abhorring any principles but what are for the good of the United Colonies of *America*, and detesting those arguments brought by some men in said meeting to dissuade the people from complying with said recommendation, we take this method of letting the publick know our dissent from the aforesaid proceedings of the town, having no other way to make our sentiments known. We request that this Protest may be entered in the Town-book, to let posterity know that there were a few in this town who dared to stand forth in favour of an injured and oppressed country, treated with every species of wickedness used by tyranny to enslave mankind; and it is a matter of great grief to us that the cause of liberty is

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treated with such indignity by some of the inhabitants of the Town of *Barnstable*.

JOSEPH OTIS,	NATHANIEL HOWLAND,
THOMAS ANNABLE,	EBENEZER LOTHROP,
BENJAMIN SMITH,	BINNEY BAKER,
ZACCHEUS HOWLAND,	JONATHAN HALLET,
JOSEPH JENKINS,	CORNELIUS LOVELL,
JOSEPH SMITH,	SETH LOTHROP,
FREEMAN PARKER,	BENONI CROCKER,
JOHN CROCKER, JR.,	JOHN BLISH,
NATHAN BASSETT,	EDMUND HAWES,
DAVID SMITH,	JOHN RUSSEL,
JOB HOWLAND,	CHARLES CONANT.
JAMES DAVIS,	

—  
STURBRIDGE, WORCESTER COUNTY.

At a Town-meeting in *Sturbridge*, June 27, 1776, being duly warned for the purpose aftermentioned, after some debate on the matter respecting independence, it was put to vote, Whether, should the honourable Congress, for the safety of these Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, they, the said inhabitants of *Sturbridge*, will solemnly engage, with their lives and fortunes, to support them in the measure?

Passed in the affirmative unanimously.

—  
FITCHBURGH, WORCESTER COUNTY.

July 1, 1776.

*Voted*, That if the honourable Continental Congress should, for the safety of these United Colonies, declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, that we, the inhabitants of said town, will, so far as we are able, support them in the measure with our lives and fortunes.

—  
ASHBY, MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

July 1, 1776.

Agreeable to a Resolve of the late honourable House of Representatives, passed on the 10th of *May* last, the inhabitants of this town being assembled for that purpose, on the 1st day of *July* instant, and unanimously voted as follows, viz: That should the honourable Congress, for the safety of the Colonies, declare them independent of *Great Britain*, the inhabitants of *Ashby* will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure.

—  
GREENWICH, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

At a legal Town-meeting, held at the Publick House, *Greenwich*, on *Monday*, the 1st day of *July*, 1776, at three of the clock in the afternoon, first voted and chose Mr. *Nehemiah Stebbins* Moderator.

2d. Voted for independence on *Great Britain* if the honourable *American* Congress thinks fit, and most for the interest and safety of the Colonies; it being a unanimous vote, not one dissenting.

—  
WINCHENDON, WORCESTER COUNTY.

At a general Town-meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of *Winchendon*, qualified to vote in the choice of a Representative, on the 4th day of *July*, 1776; whereas this Town has been called upon by the honourable House of Representatives of this Colony to signify their minds in regard to *American* Independence, being fully sensible of the cruel and oppressive measures which are pursued by the King and Parliament of *Great Britain* in order to enslave these Colonies, and consequently the difficulty that will attend our being ever again united with *Great Britain*;

Therefore, unanimously *Resolved*, That if the honourable Continental Congress should think best, for the safety of the Colonies, to declare them independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, that we will, with our lives and fortunes, support them in the measure.

—  
EASTHAM, BARNSTABLE COUNTY.

*Voted* to instruct our Representative to use his influence that the Continental Congress do declare the United Colonies independent of *Great Britain*, if they think proper and to the advantage of the Colonies; that we will support the cause with our lives and fortunes.