

put in *Wiltsy's* store a number of chests and trunks, containing (as he said) officers' baggage, for which he took *Wiltsy's* receipt. He had a pass from General *Schuyler* to go to *Fredericksburgh*, in *Dutchess* County, with his baggage, which he showed *Wiltsy*, 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. *Wiltsy*, 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 *Eseck 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 publick 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 *Mathews* for his truly patriotick 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 publick papers.

BENJAMIN YOUNG, *Foreman*.

May 6, 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,

and a deep sense of our present situation, we wish to think and proceed aright in affairs of such great consequence; and are willing, therefore, to submit our opinions to the candid judgment of the publick.

The unhappy dispute between *Great Britain* and these United Colonies seems now arrived to a crisis, from whence events ought to take place which, at the beginning, we believe, were in contemplation of but few, and even by them viewed at a much greater distance. When dissensions first arose, we felt our hearts warmly attached to the King of *Great Britain* and the Royal family; but now the case is much altered. At that time we wished to look upon the Ministry and Parliament as the only fountains from which the bitter waters flowed, and considered the King as deceived and misguided by his counsellors; and were therefore led to think that he might, in a proper time, open his eyes, and become a mediator between his contending subjects. The measures, however, still pursued against *America* leave no room to expect such an interposition from motives of goodness and affection, or with concessions, which may be justly required. Our enemies denounce our ruin, from the whole tenour of their conduct; and the King's speeches, and addresses, resolutions, and acts of the Parliament, are evidently concerted to carry their great favourite point. Prospects of a reconciliation have opened themselves to some; but they, we fear, were only the ignorant, credulous, and unwary; and even to them they must, ere this, have closed with more threatening appearances. The gracious receipt of a Continental petition, and the bare mention of Commissioners, have been severally construed good marks of reconciliation and peace, by those who too fondly hoped what was generally desired.

When the *British* Parliament assumed an absolute power over us, and attempted to exercise that power, an opposition was formed in the United Colonies, the most pacifick which could be adopted, with any probability of success, in the last resort; should our enemies persist in their measures, and endeavour to drive us into submission by force. This opposition became a great offence in their eyes: our petitions were treated with contempt, our actions termed rebellious, and arms used to subdue us. As the Colonies seemed determined, from the first, to maintain their rights, and the rights of a free people, they were obliged to repel force by force; and, for the effectual purpose thereof, as occasions required, to take into their own hands the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial powers of Government. This was a necessary consequence, and no settled and permanent opposition could be made without it. They violated the faith of Charters, the principles of the Constitution, and attempted to destroy our legal as well as natural rights. We could do nothing without forming at least a temporary Government of our own, by laying aside that part, and dispensing with those forms, of the old Constitution, which were incompatible with our safety or success. They have broken through positive laws, and express acts of Assembly, as well as the ties which unite man to man in general affection; by which means they have become felons and enemies under those laws. In the struggle, the lives of hundreds have been destroyed; flourishing towns burnt down and demolished; property seized and taken, secretly and openly; thousands reduced from easy and affluent circumstances to poverty and distress; and all the horrors of an expensive and dreadful war experienced. We have opposed with arms, and persevered in our measures, with a resolution to maintain our rights, and regarded no law heretofore made but as it was found consistent with such a laudable design. Both sides grew every day more and more incensed, from circumstances which always arise in such contests; and that general confidence, so necessary to the support of every kind of Government, seems entirely annihilated, without a prospect of reunion of affections sufficient to restore it; it becomes daily more out of their power and farther from their inclinations to put us on the footing we stood at the close of the last war, or repair the great damages we have sustained; which, if they should ever confess their errors, and desire to close with us on the terms we have hitherto offered, they must, in justice and reason, agree ought to be done.

Besides, the welfare of ourselves and future generations obliges us to turn matters over in every point of view, and consider what has been the issue of contests most similar to our own. As virtue or publick spirit cannot be thoroughly

lost in any country, but must survive in the breasts of many individuals, so it would be too sanguine to imagine that any country is without some men of ambitious and selfish views, who, taking the advantage of favourable opportunities and an unsettled state, turn the scale too much to their own side, and destroy the liberty or fix the chains of their country. This evil we find generally arises in or after civil broils, when the people have no established Government, or are led, from a sense of danger or unlimited confidence, to give themselves up blindly to their leaders. This misfortune, we hope, will never happen among us; nor do we believe that, at this time, there is any influence or inclination to effect or desire it. However, it is better to prevent evils than have them to remedy; and no precaution can be too great for the attainment of every valuable end to mankind. When things are fixed in a point beyond the present, many advantages may probably accrue; we, therefore, your constituents, recommend and instruct you, as far as your voices will contribute, to cause a total and final separation from *Great Britain* to take place as soon as possible; or, as we conceive this great point will not come within your immediate province, that, as far as in your power, you cause such instructions to be given to the Delegates from this Colony to the Continental Congress; that you weigh well the importance of the matter, and endeavour to lodge power in the hands of those whose honesty, wisdom, and love for their country, will direct them to use it for the publick good; that, as far as you conceive are admitted, you cause a free and happy Constitution to be established, with a renunciation of the old, or so much thereof as has been found inconvenient and oppressive; and that you endeavour to fix a publick jealousy in this Constitution, as an essential principle of its support.

In the present unsettled state of affairs, when the Government erected among us is confessed on all hands to be only temporary, for the immediate purpose of opposing the arbitrary strides of *Great Britain*, and effecting a reconciliation with the mother country; when the contest is between subject and subject, with the established power of peace and war at the head of our enemies, and our professions and actions tend only to bring about a reconciliation, we have not the least room to believe that any foreign nation will espouse our cause in an open and avowed manner; but when we lay aside these considerations, and bid the last adieu, some foreign power may, for their own interest, lend an assisting hand, settle a trade, and enable us to discharge the great burdens of the war, which otherwise may become intolerable.

Here, again, we would direct you, as far as relates to your Province, to beware of any other than commercial alliances with foreigners; and to keep their armies off your shores, if possible. We ask for a full representation; free and frequent elections; and that no standing armies whatever should be kept up in time of peace. We trust you will use your utmost care and circumspection at this trying crisis, that, as *America* is the last of the world which has contended for her liberty, so she may be the most free and happy. She has many advantages which others in nearly her circumstances have not known, arising from her situation and strength, and the experience of all before to profit by. View well the defects in other Governments, and consider the visible causes which reduced them from freedom to slavery, or raised them from slavery to liberty; and learn by these examples. It was by a Revolution, and the choice of the people, that the present Royal family was seated on the Throne of *Great Britain*; and we conceive the Supreme Being hath left it in our power to choose what Government we please for our civil and religious happiness; and when that becomes defective, or deviates from the end of its institution, and cannot be corrected, that the people may form themselves into another, avoiding the defects of the former. This we would now wish to have effected, as soon as the general consent approves, and the wisdom of our councils will admit; that we may, as far as possible, keep up our primary object, and not lose ourselves in hankering after a reconciliation with *Great Britain*.

Good Government alone, and the prosperity of mankind, can be in the Divine intention; we pray, therefore, that, under the superintending providence of the Ruler of the Universe, a Government may be established in *America*,

the most free, happy, and permanent, that human wisdom can contrive, and the perfection of man maintain.

Published by order of the Committee:

ROLFE ELDRIDGE, *Clerk.*

CHARLES MAC IVER TO ROBERT TOWNSHEND HOOE.

Alexandria, May 6, 1776.

SIR: As I have never been concerned in drawing Petitions or Memorials, and have no patterns of such writings, may I hope your honourable Convention will condescend to grant the contents of this paper a hearing, destitute as it will be of form.

I would humbly represent, that I have for many years interested myself in plans of emigration, which, though they may seem directly intended for the benefit of particular people, yet were also originally intended, and eventually calculated, for the emolument and prosperity of this Continent, wherein I have been long disposed to end my days.

Though more instrumental in these emigrations than any individual I have heard of, others reaped the benefit of my designs, whilst I lost time and money by the unpunctuality, clashing interests, selfishness, indolence, and inattention of various people on both sides of the *Atlantick*.

When the spirit of emigration was largely diffused among the common people, some people of superior rank took advantage of it; and, desirous to fatten on the ignorance and dependance of their poorer countrymen, conceived the design of diverting them into clusters, resembling the clanships of their native country. At the same time I was deceived by some, and disappointed in my expectations of others on this side, which obliged those I had instructed and retained as my assistants on the other side to look for employment elsewhere. Employers they readily found, and some, both employers and assistants, have made fortunes, of which the greatest part might have been fixed in *America*, could I have got the *Virginians* to adventure. As I have wasted many years depending on a successful issue of my designs, so I have contracted such a relish for them as has disqualified me, in some measure, from the pursuit of other business, though I understand a variety.

Wherefore, though you promised no support to the plan of which you have heard the sketch, which, as a member of Convention, you did not think it your duty nor for the interest of your constituents to do; yet, agreeable to what you thought the Convention would encourage, give me leave to represent that the address necessary to engage any kind of emigration is no more than a necessary part of the plan I showed you. I have never failed to persuade the poor and disinterested of my country with whom I had opportunities of conversing, except in very few instances, wherein they were tampered with and supported by men of superior wealth, and principles widely different. I therefore entertain little doubt of success of engaging artisans, of whom my former plans required no inconsiderable number.

The wisdom of the honourable Convention may devise some plan of alluring and interesting the affections of such people, whether by removing every civil or religious stumbling-block, if such exists, or some temporary or permanent accommodation equally inviting.

The last paragraph solely regards the plan you propose to support in Convention. I would now beg leave to address you, and such other members of your honourable body as it may suit to adventure as individuals, or in mercantile adventures or copartnerships. To such I would intimate that I have not relinquished the design of diverting a considerable part of the tide of emigration to the districts of *Potomack*, on which I had in a more particular manner fixed my affections. My hopes are founded on a proper acquaintance with what appertains to this subject, and the best instruments in *Scotland*, and in the north of *Ireland*.

If, in these pursuits, I can procure such appointments from the Convention and individuals as may enable me to pursue my design with incessant application among the various ranks of life, and to shift my situation as often as it is proper and necessary so to do, I have little doubt of acquitting myself a useful member of your community.

Whatever selfishness may be laid to the charge of this undertaking, I beg it may also be known that I have long been inclined to repose my hopes of political happiness on the prosperity of *America*, to which few of her own sons have

been attached with such a fervour of enthusiasm. If the honourable Convention is pleased to enjoin it upon me as a necessary task, I doubt not of procuring such consistent evidence of this, as they may also please to accept as an earnest of the zeal and fidelity with which I propose to serve them. And as a further security against any egregious imposition, I would humbly propose that one or more sensible and candid friends of the Convention, residing in *Europe*, may have a power to disburse my appointments with such precaution that I may not long eat the bread of idleness, nor be allowed to triumph in my ingratitude to the country and magnanimity of the Convention. At the same time let me beg the honourable Convention may give me assurances of support and redress against the selfishness, caprices, or tyranny of any persons intrusted with such a power.

Too much address, secrecy, and precaution on all hands cannot be used in this business; for, notwithstanding I may have as many advantages on the whole, from the country of my birth, from the nature of my education, and the manner of my life, as most men; yet unknown dangers from private attacks, public oppression, or despotick laws, may start in the prosecution of this business.

In hopes of all the support you and other sons of liberty can give this undertaking, (which, for various reasons, cannot commence at a more proper period than the present.) I respectfully remain, sir, your obliged and humble servant,

CHARLES MAC IVER.

To Robert Townshend Hooe, Esquire.

ROBERT POTTENS TO MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

Baltimore, May 6, 1776.

HONOURABLE SIR: Sometime ago I did myself the pleasure of waiting on you with two letters of recommendation, one from *William Lux*, Esquire, the other from Major *Gist*, intimating that I was willing to serve this country as far as my abilities were able. As I am informed there are at present some resignations, I hope your Honours will be so kind as to think of me, and grant any commission that you may think my character most deserving of; or if not now, at any time hereafter that may be most convenient. I hope if I am so happy as to be granted a commission, that I shall discharge my trust with fortitude and honour, and shall never be backward when occasion requires.

I have the honour to subscribe myself, honourable sirs, your most obedient, humble servant,

ROBERT POTTENS.

To the Honourable the *Maryland* Council of Safety.

BALTIMORE COMMITTEE TO THE MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

In Committee of Observation for Baltimore County, }
May 6, 1776. }

GENTLEMEN: We received your letter of the 1st instant. Mr. *Young* had liberty to take the schooner *Ninety-Two* at our last meeting. We have the pleasure to inform you that our boom is now laid down, and so far secured that we judge the vessels sunk at *Whetstone* may be removed. You will therefore please to give orders for that purpose as soon as you think proper.

We are, gentlemen, your most humble servants,

SAMUEL PURVIANCE, JUN., *Chairman*,
WILLIAM LUX, *Vice Chairman*,
WILLIAM BUCHANAN, JAMES CALHOUN,
JOHN STERRETT, WILLIAM BOYD,
B. GRIFFITH, WILLIAM AISQUITH.

To the Honourable the Council of Safety of *Maryland*.

GEORGE WOOLSEY TO MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

Baltimore, May 6, 1776.

GENTLEMEN: I received your favour of the 3d instant by Captain *Fulford*, and observe the contents; and never was so much surprised as on the receipt, and your informing me that you never heard from me since the 9th of *February*, which was the time I contracted with you for the brig *Rogers*; and, also, that it does not appear to you that I have done anything. In the purchase of her cargo, it certainly must appear to you that, when the Committee took the vessels here to sink for the safety of this town, mine was