

Select County Declarations April-July 1776

Read the excerpts from these county declarations and answer the questions. Notice they were written before the Continental Congress declared independence on July 2, 1776.

Charlotte County, Virginia, April 23, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36205

“...we judge it to be a dictate of the first law of nature, to continue to oppose every attempt on our lives and properties; and we give it you in charge, to use your best endeavours that the Delegates which are sent to the General Congress be instructed immediately to cast off the *British* yoke, and to enter into a commercial alliance with any nation or nations friendly to our cause. And as King George the Third, of *Great Britain*, &c., has manifested deliberate enmity towards us, and, under the character of a parent, persists in behaving as a tyrant, that they, in our behalf, renounce allegiances to him forever...”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences? What does this show about the relationship between the people and their representatives in government?

James City, Virginia, April 24, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36206

“We, therefore, whose names are hereunto subscribed, do request and instruct you, our Delegates, (provided no just and honourable terms are offered by the King,) to exert your utmost abilities, in the next Convention, towards dissolving the connection between *America* and *Great Britain*, totally, finally, and irrevocably.”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences? What does this show about the relationship between the people and the king?

Buckingham County, Virginia, May 13, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36207

“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...”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences? What does this show about the need to make our voices heard by our representatives in government?

Charles County, Maryland, June 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36211

“...we are of opinion that the time has fully arrived for the Colonies to adopt the last measure for our common good and safety, and that the sooner they declare themselves separate from, and independent of the Crown and Parliament of *Great Britain*, the sooner they will be able to make effectual opposition, and establish their liberties on a firm and permanent basis. We, therefore, most earnestly instruct and charge you to move for without loss of time, and endeavour to obtain, positive instructions from the Convention of *Maryland* to their Delegates in Congress, immediately to join the other Colonies in declaring that the United Colonies no longer owe allegiance to, nor are they dependant upon, the Crown or Parliament of *Great Britain*...”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences? What does this show about the forming relationship between the colonies?

Talbot County, Maryland (no date available)

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36212

“...That they may be instructed by the present Convention to concur and co-operate with the Delegates of the other United Colonies, concluding such treaties with foreign kingdoms, and in adopting such other measures as shall be judged necessary for promoting the liberty, safety, and interest of *America*, and defeating the schemes and machinations of our enemies, the King and Parliament and Ministry of *Great Britain*.”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences? What does this show about the idea of consent of the governed—people giving or taking back their permission to be ruled?

Prepare for Class Discussion

1. How did some American colonists show Congress they supported breaking away from King George in Great Britain?
2. What is the relationship between the people and their government **representatives**?
3. How do county declarations show the idea of **consent of the governed**?