

American Revolution. — Proceedings of the Town. — Act respecting Tea. — Non-consumption Covenant. — Sentiments of the People. — Country Convention. — People march to Cambridge. — Courts stopped. — treatment of the Tories. — Proceedings of the Town. — Provincial Congress meets. — Public Stores. — New Town Covenant. — Minute Companies formed. — Mr. Emerson preaches. — Expedition of the British Spies. — Provincial Congress. — Public Stores. — Excitement.

THE most interesting period in the history of the United States is undoubtedly that in which they shook off their allegiance to Great Britain, and assumed the right of governing themselves. Much of the spirit of those times may be known from a general survey of the country, and especially the state of Massachusetts; but the mainsprings of that great revolution, the feelings and acts of the people, are best understood from the minute histories of the towns. All, however, are not equally interesting. Some from their locality, accidental occurrences, or peculiar patriotism, were more distinguished than others; and such, from some of these circumstances, is Concord. The events of the 19th of April, 1775, the proceedings of various state and county conventions held here, and especially the proceedings of the town, would afford matter for an interesting volume; and give to the history of Concord more than ordinary value. Though I shall draw liberally from all my sources of information, this history can contain a small part only of the important productions of those eventful times.

From the commencement of the controversy between England and the colonies, the citizens of Concord took a rational but decided stand in favor of liberty. They watched with interest the progress of this controversy and did not fail to express their disapprobation of the obnoxious acts of the British Parliament. As early as October, 1767, the town instructed their representative to oppose the operation of the stamp act, and to unite in all constitutional measures that might be taken to obtain its repeal. In December, 1767, the Selectmen were chosen a committee to consider and report on those measures, "which threaten the country with poverty and ruin." After accepting their report, the town voted, "to encourage industry, economy, frugality, and manufactures, at home and abroad, and to prevent purchasing so much as we have done of foreign commodities." Capt. James Barrett was chosen a delegate to the convention held in Boston, Sept. 22, 1768, "to consult on the best measures for the good of the province in this critical day." The spirit of liberty was thus early and effectually kindled in Concord.

The address of the citizens of Boston, of the 20th of November, 1772, relating to the distressed state of the Province, was laid before this town, December 20th following; and a committee, consisting of Mr. Joseph Lee, Charles Prescott Esq., John Cuming, Esq., Daniel Bliss Esq., Mr. John Flint, Dea. Thomas Barrett, Capt. Stephen Hosmer, Capt. James Barrett, and Mr. Ephraim Wood, jr., was chosen to prepare an answer, and instructions to the representative of the town. Their reports, made at an adjourned meeting, Jan. 11, 1773, "after being several times read, and very coolly and deliberately debated upon," were unanimously accepted in full town-meeting. They appear at length on the town records, and express "firm attachment and ardent love to our Most Gracious Sovereign, King George, in defence of whose person and dignity we are always ready, not only to spend our fortunes but our lives, while we are in the employment of our inestimable privileges, granted to us by royal charter," but specify at the same time several ways in which these privileges have been curtailed and the charter violated. "As men," they said, "we have a right to life, liberty, and property; as Christians, we, in this land, blessed be God for it, have a right to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences; and as subjects, we have a right to personal security, personal liberty, and private property." "These principal rights we have as subjects of Great Britain; and no power on earth can, agreeably to our constitution, take them from us, or any part of them without our consent." They denied the power of Parliament to tax them without their consent, and expressed their firm determination, "never tamely to submit" to any infringement of their liberties. Several other meetings were held during this year.

The act of Parliament in relation to exporting tea into the colonies, was laid before the town Jan. 20th, 1774, and referred to a committee. Their report, made at an adjourned meeting, held four days afterwards, was, after full discussion, unanimously accepted. It breathes a tone of



ardent patriotism and fearless independence, worthy of the age in which it was produced.

“This town, at this and a former meeting, taking into serious consideration the present alarming situation of our public affairs, in consequence of the advice received from the united committees of correspondence in the vicinity of Boston, communicated to us, do, express of our gratitude to them, freely and cheerfully give our sentiments thereon.

“We cannot possibly view with indifference the past and present obstinate and unwearied endeavours of the enemies of this, as well as the mother country, to rob us of our inestimable rights, that are the distinguishing glory and felicity of this land; rights that we are obliged, to no power under heaven for the enjoyment of, as they are primarily the sole purchase, and glorious product of the heroic enterprise of the first settlers of these American colonies, under the smiles of Heaven. And though we cannot but be alarmed at the great majority in the British Parliament, for the imposition of unconstitutional taxes upon the colonies, yet it gives life and strength to every attempt in opposing such despotic measures, that not only the people of this but the neighbouring provinces (a few only excepted) are remarkably united in the important and interesting opposition, which, as it succeeded before in some measure, by the blessing of Heaven, so we cannot but hope will be attended with still greater success for the future. Animated with such a prospect, we cheerfully come into the following resolves.

“*Resolved*, 1. That these colonies have been and are still illegally and unconstitutionally taxed by the British Parliament, as they are not really or virtually represented there.

“2. That purchasing commodities subject to such illegal taxation is an implicit, though an impious and sordid, resignation of the liberties and privileges of this free and happy people.

“3. That as the British Parliament, in addition to repeated incroachments on our liberties, have empowered the East India Company to export their tea into America, subject to a duty for the sole purpose of raising a revenue, which we view as a new invention, inadvertently to catch us in those chains of slavery that have long been forged for the purpose, therefore, - We, to render such vile designs abortive, absolutely and determinately resolve,

“4. That we will not, either by ourselves or any from, or under us, buy sell, or use any of the East India Company's tea, imported from Great Britain; or any other tea, while there is a duty thereon, affixed by act of Parliament for raising a revenue in America; neither will we suffer any such tea to be made use of in any of our families. Also resolved, that all such persons as shall purchase, or sell, or use any such tea, shall be for the future deemed unfriendly, and inimical to the happy constitution of this country.

“5. That we will, in conjunction with our brethren in America, risk our fortunes, and even our lives, in defence of his Majesty King George the Third, his person, crown, and dignity; and will also, with the same resolution, as his free-born subjects in this country, to the utmost of our power and ability, defend all our charter rights, that they may be transmitted inviolate to the latest posterity.

“6. That if any person or persons whatsoever, inhabitants of this province, shall for the future, so long as there is a duty on tea, import any from the India House in England, or shall be factors for the East India Company, we will treat them as enemies to their country, and with contempt and detestation.

“7. That we think it our duty, at this critical time of our public affairs to return our hearty thanks to the town of Boston, for every rational measure they have taken for the preservation or recovery of our invaluable rights and liberties. And, should the watchful, vigilant, and persevering, with a steady zeal, to espy out every thing that shall have a tendency to subvert our happy constitution.

EPHRAIM WOOD, JR.  
JOHN FLINT } *Committee.*  
TIMOTHY WHEELER, JR.



*Concord, Jan, 24, 1774.*”

Another similar document, showing the peculiar feelings of those times, was the non-consumption covenant. This was considered and adopted at a town-meeting, June 27, 1774; and was signed by more than 300 voters.

“We the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of Concord, having taken into our serious consideration the precarious state of the liberties of North America, and more especially the present distressed condition of this insulted province, embarrassed as it is by several acts of the British Parliament, tending to the entire subversion of our natural and charter rights; among which is the act for blocking up the harbour of Boston: and fully sensible of our indispensable duty to lay hold of every means in our power, to preserve and recover the much injured constitution of our country; and conscious at the same time of no alternative between the horrors of slavery, and the carnage and desolation of a civil war, but a suspension of all commercial intercourse with the Island of Great Britain: do in the presence of God, solemnly, and in good faith, covenant and engage with each other:—

“1. That from henceforth we will suspend all commercial intercourse with the Island of Great Britain, until the said act for blocking up the said harbour be repealed, and a restoration of our charter rights be obtained.

“2. That there may be the less temptation to others to continue in the said now dangerous commerce, we do in like manner, solemnly covenant that we will not buy, purchase, or consume, or suffer any person by, for, or under us to buy, purchase, or consume, in any manner whatsoever, any goods, wares, or merchandise, which shall arrive in America from Great Britain from and after the last day of August next ensuing. And in order as much as in us lies, to prevent our being interrupted and defeated in this only peaceable measure, entered into for the recovery and preservation of our rights, we agree to break off all trade, commerce, and dealings whatsoever with all persons, who, preferring their own private interest to the salvation of their now perishing country, shall still continue to import goods from Great Britain, or shall purchase of those who shall import: arms, ammunition, and medicines for the sick only excepted.

“3. That such persons may not have it in their power to impose upon us by any pretence whatever, we further agree to purchase no article of merchandise from them or any of them, who shall not have signed this, or a similar covenant, or will not produce an oath, certified by a magistrate, to be by them taken to the following purport; viz. ‘I, \_\_\_ of \_\_\_, in the county of \_\_\_, do solemnly swear, that the goods I have now on hand and propose for sale, have not, to the best of my knowledge, been imported from Great Britain into any part of America since the last of August, 1774; and that I will not, contrary to the spirit of an agreement entered into through this province, import, or purchase of any person so importing, any goods as aforesaid, until the port or harbour of Boston shall be opened, and we are restored to the freedom of our constitution and charter rights.’

“4. We agree that after this or a similar covenant has been offered to any persons, and they refuse to sign it or produce the oath aforesaid, we will consider them as contumacious importers, and withdraw all commercial connexion with them, so far as not to purchase any article whatever of merchandise imported from Great Britain.

“*Provided nevertheless*; notwithstanding the obligations which we have laid ourselves under by the above instrument, should there be a congress of the provinces on the continent, or the major part of them, to consult and advise suitable measures to be taken in this difficult and alarming day, which is already begun by the late House of Representatives, and the example is likely to be followed by the neighbouring governments; should said body, when convened, adopt measures, after deliberation, which they shall judge more salutary and safe for the whole community; then what has been signed above we hereby reserve liberty to disannul, and make void this present covenant upon our acceptance



thereof. As witness our hands this 24th of June 1774.”

This covenant, copied partly from one sent from Boston, was scrupulously regarded. It may well be supposed, that where proceedings like these were had, the attention of the people would be greatly awakened. If there were any “enemies of liberty,” they might be easily detected. In a careful review of that period, however, I am astonished that so few arrayed themselves on the side of England in opposition to the wishes of the colonies. The whole town of Concord, excepting two or three individuals, was a united family of “Sons of Liberty.” The excitement, or rather the opposition to British oppression, gradually increased; and its progress from the year 1773 was uncommonly rapid. Petitions having been presented in vain for a redress of their grievances, the people began seriously to think of asserting their rights by an appeal to arms, should other means to accomplish their object fail. Such a crisis seemed then to be approaching; for England had already assumed a hostile attitude; large numbers of soldiers and munitions of war had arrived at Boston; and the people had every indication that they were to be compelled into submission by military force.

In July the “Act for the better regulation of the government of Massachusetts Bay” was received in Boston; in conformity to which the Mandamus Council and many other officers were appointed. This produced great excitement in the community and evil consequences were anticipated. The people seemed determined not to submit to an act so unconstitutional and oppressive. During this commotion an individual went secretly to Cambridge on the 1st of August, contrary to the unanimous wish of his fellow citizens, to inform some of the members of the Council, of the state of public feeling, and to put them on their guard against an attack from the people, which he thought likely to take place.

In August frequent meetings were held in Concord to consult on the proper measures to be pursued in those gloomy times. A county convention was also recommended, and it was invited to meet here at Concord on the last of the month. This convention, consisting of 150 delegates from every town in the county, held a session in Concord on the 30th and 31st of August. Messrs. Ephraim Wood, jr., John Flint, and Nathan Meriam were delegates from Concord; Mr. Samuel Farrar, Capt. Abijah Pierce, and Capt. Eleazer Brooks, from Lincoln; Messrs. Francis Faulkner, John Hayward, and Ephraim Hapgood, from Acton; Messrs. Stephen Davis, John Reed, John Moore, and John Webber, from Bedford; and from other towns, an able delegation. The Hon. James Prescott of Groton was chairman, and Mr. Ebenezer Bridge, clerk. The objects of the convention were brought forward, and discussed with great energy, talent, an most ardent patriotism; and a committee of nine were chosen to take them into consideration. They reported as follows:

“It is evident to every attentive mind, that this Province is in a very dangerous and alarming situation. We are obliged to say, however painful it may be to us, that the question now is, whether by a submission to some late Acts of Parliament of Great Britain, we are contented to be the most abject slaves, and entail that slavery on posterity after us, or, by a manly, joint and virtuous opposition, assert and support our freedom. There is a mode of conduct, which, in our very critical circumstances, we would wish to adopt, - a conduct, on the one hand, never degenerating into rage, passion and confusion. This is a spirit which we revere, as we find it exhibited in former ages, and which will command applause to the latest posterity. The late Acts of Parliament pervade the whole system of jurisprudence, by which means we think the fountains of justice are fatally corrupted. Our defence must therefore be immediate in proportion to the danger. We must now exert ourselves, or all those efforts, which for ten years past have brightened the annals of this country, will be totally frustrated. LIFE and DEATH, or what is more, FREEDOM and SLAVERY, are in a peculiar sense now before us; and the choice and success, under God, depend greatly on ourselves. We are therefore bound, as struggling not only for ourselves, but for future generations, to express our sentiments in the following resolves - sentiments, which we think are founded in truth and justice, and therefore sentiments we are determined to abide by.

“*Resolved*, 1. That as true and loyal subjects of our gracious Sovereign, George the Third, King of Great Britain, etc., we by no means intend to withdraw our



allegiance from him; but, while permitted the free exercise of our natural and charter rights, are resolved to expend life and treasure in his service.

“2. That when our ancestors emigrated from Great Britain charters and resolves and solemn stipulations expressed the conditions, and what particular rights they yielded, what each party had to do and perform; and what each of the contracting parties were equally bound by.

“3. That we know of no instance in which this province has transgressed the rules on their part, or any ways forfeited their natural and charter rights to any power on earth.

“4. That the Parliament of Great Britain has exercised a power contrary to the abovementioned charter by passing acts, which hold up their absolute supremacy over the colonists; by another act blocking up the harbour of Boston, and by two late acts, the one entitled, “an Act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay;” the other entitled “an Act for the more impartial administration of justice in said province;” and by enforcing all these iniquitous acts with a large armed force to dragoon and enslave us.

“5. That the late act of Parliament, entitled, “an Act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay,” expressly acknowledges the authority of the charter granted by their Majesties, King William & Queen Mary, to said province; and that the only reasons, suggested In the preamble to said act, which is intended to deprive us of The privileges confirmed to us by said charter, are the inexpediency of continuing those privileges, and a charge of their having Been forfeited, to which charge the province has had no opportunity Of answering.

“6. That a debtor may as justly refuse to pay his debts, because it is inexpedient for him, as the Parliament of Great Britain deprive us of our charter privileges, because it is inexpedient to a corrupt administration for us to enjoy them.

“7. That in all free states there must be an equilibrium in the legislative body, without which constitutional check they cannot be said to be a free people.

“8. That the late act, which ordains a council to be appointed by his Majesty, his heirs and successors from time to time, by warrant under His or their signet or sign manual, and which ordains that the said Counselors shall hold their offices respectively during the pleasure Of his Majesty, effectually alters the constitutional equilibrium, renders The council absolute tools and creatures, and entirely destroys the importAnce of the representative body.

“9. That no state can long exist free and happy, where the course of Justice is obstructed; and that when trials by juries, which are the grand bulwarks of life and property, are destroyed or weakened, a people fall immediately under arbitrary power.

“10. That the late act, which gives the governor of this province a power of appointing judges of the superior and inferior courts, commissioners of oyer and terminer, the attorney general, provosts, marshals and justices of the peace, and to remove all of them (the judges of the superior court excepted) without consent of the council, entirely subverts a free administration of justice - as the fatal experience of mankind in all ages has testified, that there is no greater species of corruption, than when judicial and executive officers depend for their existence and support on a power independent of the people.

“11. That by ordaining jurors to be summoned by the sheriff only, which sheriff is to be appointed by the governor without consent of council, that security which results from a trial by our peers is rendered altogether precarious; and is not only an evident infraction upon our charter, but a subversion of our common rights as Englishmen.

“12. That every people have an absolute right of meeting together to consult upon common grievances, and to petition, remonstrate, and use every legal method for their removal.

“13. That the act which prohibits these constitutional meetings cuts away the scaffolding of English freedom, and reduces us to a most abject state of vassalage



and slavery.

“14. That it is our opinion these late acts, if quietly submitted to, will annihilate the last vestiges of liberty in this province, and, therefore, we must be justified by God and the world in never submitting to them.

“15. That it is the opinion of this body, that the present act, respecting the government of the province, is an artful, deep-laid plan of oppression and despotism, that it requires great skill and wisdom to counteract it. This wisdom we have endeavoured to collect from the united sentiments of the county. And although we are grieved that we are obliged to mention anything, that may be attended with such very important consequences as may now ensue, yet a sense of our duty as men, as freemen, as Christian freemen, united in the firmest bonds, obliges us to resolve, that every civil office now in commission in this province, and acting in conformity to the late act of Parliament, is not an officer agreeable to our Charter, therefore unconstitutional, and ought to be opposed in the manner hereafter recommended.

“16. That we will obey all such civil officers now in commission, whose commissions were issued before the first day of July, 1774, and support them in the execution of their offices according to the manner usual before the late attempt to alter the constitution of this province; Nay, even although the Governor should attempt to revoke their commissions. But that if any Of the said officers shall accept a commission under the present plan of arbitrary government, Or, in any way or manner whatever, assist the Governor or administration in the assault now Making on our rights and liberties, we will consider them as having forfeited their commissions And yield them no obedience.

“17. That whereas the Honorable Samuel Danforth and Joseph Lee, Esqrs., two of the judges of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas for this county, have accepted commissions under the new act by being sworn members of his Majesty's Council, appointed by said act: we therefore look upon them utterly incapable of holding any office whatever. And whereas a venire on the late act of Parliament has issued from the Court of Sessions, signed by the clerk, we think they come under a preceding resolve of acting in conformity to the new act: we therefore resolve that a sub-commission to courts thus acting and under these disqualifications, is a submission to the act itself, and of consequence, as we are resolved never to submit one iota to the act, we will not submit to courts thus constituted, and thus acting in conformity to said act.

“18. That is, in consequence of the former resolve, all business at the Inferior Court of Common Pleas and Court of General Sessions of the Peace next to be holden at Concord must cease, to Prevent the many inconveniences that may arise therefrom: we resolve that all actions, writs, Suits, etc., brought to said court, ought to remain in the same condition as at present (unless Settled by consent of parties), till we know the result of a provincial and continental congress. And we resolve that no plaintiff, in any case, action, or writ aforesaid, ought to enter said action In said court thus declared to be unconstitutional. And we resolve, if the court shall sit in defiance to the voice of the county, and default actions, and issue executions accordingly, no Officer ought to serve such process. And we are also determined to support all constables, Jurors, and other officers, who from these constitutional principles shall refuse obedience to Courts which we have resolved are founded on the destruction of our charter.

“19. That it is the opinion of this body of delegates that a provincial congress is absolutely necessary in our present unhappy situation.

“These are sentiments which we are obliged to express, as these acts are intended *immediately* to take place. We must now either oppose them, or tamely give up all we have been struggling for. It is this that has forced us so soon on these very important resolves. However, we do it with humble deference to the provincial and continental congress, by whose resolutions we are determined to abide; and to whom, and the world, we cheerfully appeal for the uprightness of our conduct. On the whole, these are ‘great and profound questions.’ We are grieved to find



ourselves reduced to the necessity of entering into the discussion of them. But we deprecate a state of slavery. Our fathers left a fair inheritance to us, purchased by a waste of blood and treasure. This we Are resolved to transmit equally fair to our children after us. And if in support of our rights We are called to encounter even death, we are yet undaunted, sensible that he can never die too Soon, who lays down his life in support of the laws and liberties of his country.”

The causes of the opposition to the mother country, and the then state of the controversy, are Clearly brought to view in these important proceedings. They were not mere paper resolves, To remain a dead letter, but were to be rules of *action*: and they were executed! The question On their acceptance, after being “maturely deliberated,” was taken by yeas and nays; 146 were in favor, and 4 in opposition. An additional vote, recommending a “provincial meeting,” to assemble in Concord, on the 1st Tuesday of October, was passed; and another, to transmit these proceedings to the several towns and to the Continental Congress. On the same day, a county convention was held in Worcester, and, nine days after, one in Suffolk, for similar objects.<sup>1</sup>

On the last week in August, some of the British troops had taken from Cambridge two brass field-pieces, and from Charlestown several barrels of powder. These hostile proceedings alarmed the people and some hundreds from this and the neighbouring towns, met here on the 2d of September and proceeded to Cambridge, a part of whom were under arms. Their object appeared to be to learn the cause of those unfriendly movements of the British soldiers, and to demand the resignation of those officers who had accepted commissions under the new law. No violence was committed, nor was any intended, unless they were violently opposed. “Finding no armed force to combat, they laid aside their muskets and went to the houses of several individuals who had taken part on the side of government, and compelled them to recant, and forswear all concern in any offices under the law for altering the charter.” Ephraim Wood was one of the committee chosen to wait upon them. They afterwards returned peaceably to their homes.

September was fruitful in interesting events. Informal voluntary meetings of the people were frequent. The Court of Sessions and Court of Common Pleas for the county were to hold their sessions in Concord, on the 13th of September. On that day, great numbers of the inhabitants of this and the neighboring towns assembled on the public common. They expressed their willingness that the court should sit, if it proceeded on in the old way; but if under the new organization, they were determined to prevent it, agreeably to the recommendation of the late convention. A committee from each town then represented, was chosen to take such measures as would prevent the opening of the courts, who voted it “as their opinion that the Court of General Sessions of the Peace ought not to be opened or sit at this time,” and chose a sub-committee of five to wait on the justices of the court, and inform them of the wishes of the assembly. After some little time the court produced a written declaration, which was read before the multitude, by whom it was pronounced satisfactory, and afterwards published, declaring it inexpedient to open the court, “lest it should be construed that we act in consequence of the late unconstitutional act of Parliament”; and publicly promising, that they would “not open nor in any way proceed to the business of said court.” This declaration was signed by Thaddeus Mason, Joseph Haven, Josiah Johnson, William Stickney, Henry Gardner, Abraham Fuller, Jonathan Dix, Daniel Bliss, and Samuel Bancroft, — all the justices then present.

In consequence of these occurrences, and the determined disposition of the people, the Court of Common Pleas was adjourned to the 3d Tuesday of October. Public notice of this was drawn up by David Phipps, Sheriff of the County, by order of the unpopular judges, and given to the criers, Antill Gallap & William How, who made proclamation of the same at the court house door. This was so displeasing that they were taken before the people, and obliged to make public confession that they were “heartily sorry for what they had done”; and to promise “not to make any return on said proclamation, nor in any way be aiding or assisting in bringing on the unconstitutional plan of government.” A similar confession was published by Charles Prescott, Esq. “for signing in favor of the late Governor, Hutchinson.” Another confession was made by Daniel Heald, a deputy sheriff, for posting the notice of the adjournment Of the court on the courthouse door. These declarations were signed by the respective individuals, read to

1. Some historians have asserted that the *Suffolk* convention was the *first* one held; but this is undoubtedly erroneous. Middlesex took the lead in these important proceedings.



the multitude and published in the newspapers of those times. The people voted that such declarations were satisfactory; and then adjourned to the 3d Tuesday of October, agreeably to the adjournment of the court.

The people did not long remain quiet. Another large meeting took place on the Common the next week. A committee was chosen, of which Robert Chafin of Acton was Chairman and William Burrows<sup>2</sup> clerk, before whom every person suspected of being a *tory* was compelled to pass the ordeal of a trial. If found guilty, he was compelled to endure such punishment as an excited multitude might inflict, which they called, "humbling the tories." Several suffered in this manner. Dr. Joseph Lee was most scrupulously examined and severely treated. To satisfy their minds, he subscribed the following declaration, which was read and published.

"Whereas I, Joseph Lee of Concord, physician, on the evening of the first ultimo, did rashly and without consideration make a private and precipitate journey from Concord to Cambridge, to inform Judge Lee, that the country was assembling to come down, and on no other business, that he and others concerned might prepare themselves for the event, and with an avowed intention to deceive the people; by which the parties assembling might have been exposed to the brutal rage of the soldiery, who had timely notice to have waylaid the roads, and fired on them while unarmed, and defenceless in the dark; by which imprudent conduct I might have prevented the salutary designs of my countrymen, whose innocent intentions were only to request certain gentlemen, sworn into office on the new system of government, to resign their offices, in order to prevent the operation of that (so much detested) act of the British Parliament for regulating the government of the Massachusetts Bay: by all which I have justly drawn upon me the displeasure of my countrymen:

"When I coolly reflect on my own impudence, it fills my mind with the deepest anxiety. I deprecate the resentment of my injured country, humbly confess my errors, and implore the forgiveness of a generous and free people, solemnly declaring that for the future I will never convey any intelligence to any of the court party, neither directly nor indirectly, by which the designs of the people may be frustrated, in opposing the barbarous policy of an arbitrary, wicked and corrupt administration.

"*Concord, Sept. 19, 1774* JOSEPH LEE."

This is selected from many similar facts to show the highly excited state of public feeling; and this excitement continued to increase. The covenant of the town, already given, was scrupulously regarded, and all those who refused obedience to it, were in reality, "treated as enemies." The meetings hitherto this month took place without much formal invitation. They were the "sudden assembly of the day." The people felt that they had evils heaped upon them, and they feared others. They were determined resolutely, but rationally to have them removed. Though their object appeared as yet to be to obtain a peaceable redress of their grievances, yet evil consequences were anticipated from the frequency of the meetings, unless placed under proper legal restraint. To effect this, a special *town* meeting was called, September 26th when the "whole town resolved itself into a committee of safety to suppress all riots, tumults and disorders in the town; and to aid all untainted magistrates, who had not been aiding and assisting in bringing on a new mode of government in this province, in the execution of the laws against all offenders."<sup>3</sup> At the same time it was also voted to raise one or more companies to march at a minute's warning in case of alarm, to pay them reasonable wages when called for out of town, and to allow them to choose their own officers; to buy 420 pounds of powder and 500 pounds of ball in addition to the town stock of ammunition, and a chest of good fire-arms, "that those who are unable to purchase them themselves may have the advantage of them if necessity calls for it." At this meeting also Mr. Samuel Whitney, Capt. Jonas Heywood, Mr. Ephraim Wood, jr., Mr. Joseph Hosmer, Ensign James Chandler, and Mr. James Barrett, were chosen a committee of correspondence to hold intercourse with similar committees in other

2. Mr. Burrows died a few years since in New Ipswich, N.H., over 100 years of age.

3. It is said to be characteristic of the people of Concord to act with great deliberation, but when they do act, to act effectually. This may be seen in the proceedings just described. From the beginning of the controversy, they were opposed to taking any *unconstitutional* measures to recover their lost privileges.



towns. The selectmen had hitherto acted in that capacity. Delegates were also chosen to the proposed Provincial Congress.

The Provincial Congress met here, Oct. 11th, which was an important event. The delegates from Concord were Capt. James Barrett, Mr. Samuel Whitney, and Mr. Ephraim Wood, jr.; from Bedford, Mr. Joseph Ballard, and John Reed, Esq.; from Acton, Messrs. Josiah Hayward, Francis Faulkner, and Ephraim Hapgood; and from Lincoln, Capt. Eleazer Brooks, Mr. Samuel Farrar, and Capt. Abijah Pierce. The whole number of members was 288; and it was in all respects a most important assembly. The Hon. John Hancock of Boston was chosen President and Mr. Benjamin Lincoln, Secretary. The meeting was first held in the old court-house, but that being too small to convene so large an assembly, it was adjourned to the meeting-house. The Rev. William Emerson, by invitation of the Congress, officiated as chaplain. Two sessions, one at nine and the other at three o'clock were held each day. The state of public affairs was taken into consideration, and an address to Gov. Gage agreed upon; but it was unavailing, and did not accomplish its intended object. After remaining in session till the 15th, the Congress adjourned to Cambridge, probably for a more easy communication with the capital.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of the Provincial Congress tended to animate the citizens of Concord, and inspire them with increasing confidence in the cause of liberty and patriotic action. They approved the recommendations of that body. Several cannon were purchased and brought here, October 13th. On the 24th the town directed the selectmen to mount them and to purchase 100 pounds of four-pound cannon ball, 200 pounds of grape-shot and 392 pounds of powder; and raised £120 to pay the expense.

About this time a liberty-pole was erected on which the people's flag was first hoisted here. The occasion brought together a large concourse of people, and was hailed as an auspicious event.

November 21st, the town authorized the constables to pay the money in their hands, belonging to the Province, to Henry Gardner, Esq. of Stow, who had been appointed by Congress, "Receiver General" and at the same time voted to annul the non-consumption covenant, which, as already noticed, was entered into on the 27th of June. The articles of association, as agreed upon by the Continental Congress, were adopted in its stead. A committee of inspection, composed of Col. James Barrett, Mr. Joseph Hosmer, Capt. Jonas Heywood, Mr. Abijah Bond, and Capt. David Brown, was chosen "to see to the punctual and particular observance of the said association agreement." A preamble:—"we, whose names are underwritten, promise for ourselves and those under us, that we will strictly adhere to the Continental Congress Association, which is hereunto annexed, in all its parts and clauses;" was adopted January 25, 1775; and a copy furnished to each inhabitant for his signature, by a committee chosen for the purpose, consisting of Ensign James Barrett, Mr. Ephraim Wood, Jr., Mr. Samuel Whitney, and Mr. John Green. One of these original papers I find to be signed by seventy-two men and two single women. Stephen Holmes excepted "tea for his wife only,"—all the others were unconditional.

The organization and compensation of the minute companies was brought before the town in December, and referred to a committee, who reported, Jan. 9, 1775, the following regulations:

"1. We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, will, to the utmost of our power, defend his Majesty, King George the Third, his person, crown and dignity.

"2. We will at the same time, to the utmost of our power and abilities, defend all

4. The records in the Secretary's office give the following account of the different Congresses:—

*First Congress.*

Convened at Salem, October 7, 1774; adjourned the same day.

Convened at *Concord*, Tuesday October 11; adjourned Saturday 15th, same month.

Convened at Cambridge, Monday October 17th; adjourned Saturday 29th, same month

Convened at Cambridge Wednesday, November 23d; dissolved Saturday, Dec. 10th.

*Second Congress.*

Convened at Cambridge, Wednesday Feb. 1, 1775; adjourned Thursd. 16th same month.

Convened at Concord, Tuesday March 22; adjourned Saturday 15th, April.

Convened at Concord, Saturday, April 22; adjourned same day.

Convened at Watertown, Monday April 24; dissolved May 29th.

*Third Congress.*

Convened at Watertown, May 31, 1775; dissolved July 19th.



and every of our charter rights, liberties and privileges; and will hold ourselves in readiness at a minute's warning, with arms and ammunition thus to do.

“3. We will at all times and in all places obey our officers chosen by us, and our superior officers, in ordering and disciplining us, when and where said officers shall think proper.”

The town agreed to pay each minute man for three hours on two half days in each week, 1 shilling, 8 pence for each half day and a “cartouch-box”;<sup>5</sup> for ten months, unless otherwise ordered by the town. On the Thursday following, a meeting was held to enlist the men, when the Rev. William Emerson preached from Psalm lxxiii. 2. About sixty enlisted, including many who were either too young or too old to be required by law to do military duty. The number was subsequently increased to 100, and divided into two companies. Mr. Samuel Whitney was muster-master. On the 27th, a committee, chosen to examine them then exercising, reported that fifteen in the company were unable to furnish themselves with guns. They were supplied by the town. One of the companies was called the *Alarm Company* and directed to take care and learn the exercise of the cannon. Much military enthusiasm prevailed.

During the month of February 1775, the town used the greatest caution to have the articles of association observed. Several meetings were held, and such measures as the state of the times required, adopted. Capt. Timothy Wheeler, Mr. Andrew Conant, Mr. Samuel Whitney, Capt. John Greene, Mr. Josiah Merriam, Mr. Ephraim Wood, Jr., Mr. William Parkman, and Capt. Thomas Davis, were added to the committee of inspection, and directed to return the names of those who declined signing the articles of association. Such were to be treated with neglect and detestation.<sup>6</sup> Three only were returned.

On Monday, March 13th, 1775, there was a review of all the military companies in the town. They went into the meeting house, accompanied by a large concourse of spectators, and the Rev. Mr. Emerson preached from 2 Chronicles, xiii. 12; “*Behold God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding Trumpets, to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; For ye shall not prosper.*” These religious services were a powerful appeal to the feelings and understanding of his audience, and to Heaven for the justness of their cause. They were repeated before the Companies in Acton the week after. The Thursday following was kept as a solemn fast, on account of the Gloomy state of public affairs, when the Rev. Mr. Emerson again preached. His text was Micah, vii. 1-7.

The Provincial Congress, in February, ordered, that large quantities of provisions and military stores, sufficient to furnish 15,000 men, should be collected and deposited in Concord and Worcester, principally at the former place.<sup>7</sup> In the October proceeding, Messrs. Hancock, Orne, Heath, White, Palmer, Watson, Devens, and Pigeon had been chosen by Congress a committee of safety; and Messrs. Cheever, Lincoln, Lee, Gerry, and Gill, a committee of supplies. These committees usually met together. November 2d, they voted to procure and deposit at Concord 200 barrels of pork, 400 barrels of flour, 50 tierces of rice and 150 bushels of pease. February 13th, they requested Col. Robinson to send four brass field-pieces and two mortars to Concord, and voted to procure 15,000 canteens; February 21, 100 bell-tents for arms, 1000 field-tents, 10 tons of lead balls, cartridges for 15,000 men, 30 rounds each; 300 bushels of pease and beans, 20 hogsheads of molasses, 150 quintals of fish and two chests of carpenter's tools. February 23d, they ordered 20 hogsheads of rum to be sent here; and the next day 1000 pounds of candles, 100 hogsheads of salt, wooden spoons, two barrels of oil, six casks of Malaga wine, nine casks of Lisbon wine, 20 casks of raisins, 20 bushels of oatmeal, 1500 yards of Russia linen and 15 chests of medicine.

Capt. James Barrett, who had been appointed by Congress to have the care of all the military stores, was directed on the 15th of March by John Pigeon, “clerk of the committee of safety,” to get a sufficient number of faithful men, “to act constantly as a guard every night over the magazines of stores”; and “to engage a number of teams to be in readiness on the shortest notice, by day or night, sufficient to carry off the stores, on a courier's informing him of

5. The pay was increased in February as follows: To each captain, 2s. 4d.; 1st lieutenant, 1s. 8d.; 2d lieutenant, 1s. 4d.; sergeant, 10d.; corporal, 8d.; and private, 4d.

6. This vote remained in force till May 14, 1778, when the town annulled it, “so far as respects any persons who reside among us, and no farther.”

7. William Lincoln, Esq., to whose kindness the author is indebted for many favors, says, that 20 barrels of pork were all the public stores deposited at Worcester.



attempts being ready to be made on the magazine; and on a courier's informing him of danger, he was to alarm the neighbouring towns." On the 17th, Mr. Cheever sent from Charlestown John Austin and several other men, to be Constantly employed in carrying on the military preparations. He directed Colonel Barrett to provide them all necessary provisions, and a house to work in retired from company, "as our operations depend upon secrecy." Guards were stationed at the old south and north bridges, on the Boston road, and in the middle of the town, for the safe keeping of the stores, and to alarm the surrounding country, should occasion require. Every teamster, suspected of carrying any article to the British, was carefully examined. Concord now became as it had been a hundred years before, a distinguished military post.

British spies were often sent in disguise into the country, to learn its geography, the state of public feeling, the quantity and condition of the provincial stores, &c. Two of these spies, Capt. Brown and Ensign D'Bernicre, of the British army, went to Worcester in February, and on the 20th of March, 1775, visited Concord. They went up through Weston and Sudbury and entered the town over the south bridge. In a narrative of this expedition D'Bernicre says, "The town of Concord lies between two hills that command it entirely. There is a river runs through it with two bridges over it. In summer it is pretty dry. The town is large, and contains a church, gaol, and court house, but the houses are not close together, but in little groups. We were informed that they had fourteen pieces of cannon (ten iron and four brass), and two cohorts. They were mounted, but in so bad a manner that they could not elevate them more than they were, that is, they were fixed to one elevation; their iron cannon they kept in a house in town; their brass they had concealed in some place behind the town, in a wood. They had also a store of flour, fish, salt and rice; and a magazine of powder and cartridges. They fired their morning gun, and mounted a guard of ten men at night. We dined at the house of Mr. Bliss [Daniel Bliss, Esq.] a friend of government; they had sent him word they should not let him go out of town alive that morning; however, we told him if he would come with us, we would take care of him, as we were three and all well-armed. He consented and told us he would show us another road called the Lexington road. We set out, and of consequence left the town on the contrary side of the river to what we entered it." \* \* \* "In the town of Concord a woman directed us to the house of Mr. Bliss; a little after she came in crying, and told us they swore if she did not leave the town they would tar and feather her for directing Tories on their road."<sup>8</sup> The British officer remarked to Mr. Bliss, that the people would not fight. He urged a different opinion, and pointing to his brother, Thomas Theodore Bliss, just then passing in sight, and said, "There goes a man who will fight you in blood up to his knees!" This brother Thomas was opposed to him (Daniel Bliss) in politics; and was subsequently a brave, though unfortunate officer in the American army.<sup>9</sup>

On the 22d of March, the Provincial Congress again met in Concord. There was reason to expect, from intelligence received from Boston, that attempts would be made to take away the stores here collected; and to prevent, as far as possible, the militia arming in self-defence. "It was the great object of Congress at this meeting to support the committee of safety in the measures they had adopted for protection; and to urge the people to prepare for a firm and united resistance, should the crisis require it. They particularly recommended to the companies of minute-men to improve themselves in military discipline; and ordered several companies of artillery to be immediately organized. A system of rules and regulations for a constitutional army was adopted, should one be raised. And they earnestly solicited the selectmen of the several towns to provide for the speedy collection of all public taxes; and to raise money by loans of any individuals able and disposed to furnish it." \* \* \* "On the 8th of April it was voted to raise an army with all possible despatch, for the defence of the province against any attack which should be made by the British troops, which had a short time before been much increased."<sup>10</sup> When Congress adjourned on the 15th of April, it agreed to meet again on the 10th of May, 1775; but gave authority to the committee of safety, and the members in this neighbourhood, to call an earlier meeting, if necessary.

Meantime the committees of correspondence, in conjunction with the citizens, were actively making the military preparations necessary for defence. From a manuscript "account of the

8. Massachusetts Historical Collection Vol. iv. pages 214, 215.

9. Willard's Address, page 66.

10. Bradford, vol. i. pages 367-369



provincial stores sent to Colonel Barrett of Concord, partly in his own custody, and partly elsewhere, all under his care," found among his papers the following facts are obtained. These stores were principally brought here in March by the citizens of the town.

There were received from Mr. David Cheever of Charlestown, one of the committee of supplies: 20 loads of stores, containing about 20,000 pounds of musket-balls and cartridges 50 reams of cartridge-paper, 206 tents, 113 iron spades, 51 wood axes, 201 bill-hooks, 19 sets of harness, 24 boxes of candles, 14 chests of medicine, 27 hogsheads of wooden ware, 1 hogshead of matches, cords, irons and balls, 20 bushels of oatmeal, 5 iron worms for cannon, rammers, &c. These were stored at Captain Elnathan Jones's, Joshua Bond's, Willoughby Prescott's, Jonas Heywood's, Colonel Barrett's, and the town-house.

From Moses Gill of Boston, 11 loads, containing 150 tents, axes, pickaxes, hatchets, spades, wooden spoons and dishes, and canteens, stored at Captain Thomas Hubbard's, Ephraim Wheeler's, Willoughby Prescott's and Ephraim Potter's. Also received from R. Pierpont: 47 firkins and 2 barrels of butter, stored at Colonel James Barrett's and Mr. Humphrey Barrett's; and 55 barrels of beef, stored at Thomas and Elisha Jones's and 25 barrels at Daniel Cray's.

From Colonel Jeremiah Lee of Marblehead, 6 hogsheads, containing 35 half-barrels of powder, 6 of which were stored at Colonel Barrett's, 5 at James Chandler's, 6 at James Barrett Jr.'s; 6 at Ephraim Wood's, 6 at Joseph Hosmer's, and 6 at Jonas Heywood's. This was received in December, 1775 and in the accompanying letter, Colonel Lee writes, "Don't so much as mention the name of powder, lest our enemies should take advantage of it." Eight hogsheads more were soon received from Colonel Lee, 6 of which were sent the last of March to Leicester. He also sent to Concord another load, containing tents, poles, axes, and hatchets, stored at Abishai Brown's; and also 318 barrels of flour, 68 of which were stored at Ebenezer Hubbard's (which was partly destroyed on April 19, 1775), 66 at Captain Timothy Wheeler's, 56 at Samuel Jones's, 23 at Isaac Hubbard's, 16 at Jonas Heywood's, 82 at Samuel Whitney's and 7 at Jonathan Heywood's.

From Elbridge Gerry of Marblehead, 7 loads of salt fish, containing about 17,000 pounds, stored at Elisha Jones's; 18 casks of wine, 20 casks of raisins and a quantity of oil, (which were carried to Stow); and 47 hogsheads and 50 barrels of salt, which were stored in 15 different places in town; 4 loads of tents, tow-cloth, and canteens, stored at Ephraim Potter's; 1 bundle of sheet-lead, several hogsheads of molasses and a quantity of linen.

From Salem 46 and from Boston 12 tierces of rice, estimated to contain about 35,000 pounds; 20 stored at Ebenezer Hubbard's, 6 at Thomas Hosmer's, 3 at Thomas Davis's, 7 at Stephen Blood's, 7 at Edward Richardson's, 5 at Deacon George Minott's, and the remainder in the town-house.

All the stores brought to the town are not mentioned in the above account. Many articles were afterwards brought and many were prepared here. Firearms, gun-carriages, etc., were manufactured at Barrett's mills; cartouch-boxes, holsters, belts, and other articles of sadlery by Mr. Reuben Brown; saltpetre by Josiah Melvin; oatmeal by Capt. Timothy Wheeler; wooden plates, spoons and various other articles used in the camp and the field, by other individuals. Large quantities of beef and pork were put up here for the public service. These military operations continued more than a year afterwards. A part of the building owned by Daniel Shattuck, Esq., was erected at this time for a public store-house.

On the 29th of March, 1775, a report was circulated that the British troops were coming to Concord, which produced considerable alarm. The Provincial Committee of Safety met here on the 1st, 5th, 14th and 17th of April. At the last date they directed Colonel Barrett to mount two cannon, and raise an artillery company, and to send four cannon to Groton and two to Acton. They met at Mr. Wetherbee's in West Cambridge the next day, and gave orders for the removal of some of the stores from Concord. These were ordered to be deposited in 9 different towns; 50 barrels of beef, 100 of flour, 20 casks of rice, 15 hogsheads of molasses, 10 hogsheads of rum and 500 pounds of candles were ordered to Sudbury; 15,000 canteens, 1,500 iron pots, the spades, pickaxes, bill-hooks, axes, hatchets, crows, wheelbarrows, and several other articles were to be divided, one-third to remain in Concord, one-third went to Sudbury and one-third to Stow; 1,000 iron pots to be sent to Worcester.

Meantime the minute companies were often out for military exercise. The excitement was so great that some carried their guns with them at all times, even while attending public worship on the Sabbath. The committee of correspondence met daily with other distinguished citizens



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in town. Though very indefinite ideas prevailed, respecting the objects of the enemy, yet all the people were daily discussing in groups - the great crisis, which seemed near at hand. What that crisis might be was yet doubtful.

### TO CONTINUE READING:

CHAPTER VII. — BATTLE OF CONCORD, April 19th, 1775.

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