A Study of the Membership of the Virginia Convention of 1776

Kay Smith Jordan

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https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-9n2x-sc23

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A STUDY OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION OF 1776

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By
Kay Smith Jordan
1972
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

[Signature]
Author

Approved, August 1972

[Signature]
John Selby, Ph.D.

[Signature]
Edward M. Riley, Ph.D.

[Signature]
Jane Carson, Ph.D.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express appreciation to Dr. John Selby for his patient guidance, criticism, and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. The writer would also like to thank Dr. Edward M. Riley and Dr. Jane Carson for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript. A special note of appreciation is extended to the staff of the Research Library of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for their suggestions and help.
The Virginia Convention of May 1776 was the most important meeting in the history of the colony, for it was there that independence was declared and a new form of government established. Almost one-third of the delegates present had never attended a previous revolutionary convention. Their attendance has led some historians to conclude that the convention reflected a radicalization of the Virginia voters and a desire on their part to overthrow the established rule of the gentry.

A county by county biographical examination of the delegates to the May convention and the men they replaced does not support the thesis that a great move to the left occurred in the elections. Of the thirty-nine new men, thirteen were present because their predecessors definitely were in the military; six because former delegates probably were involved in military affairs; three because their predecessors were engaged in affairs other than political; three because the December delegates had moved. There is no explanation for the presence of eleven of the new men. In only
three cases were the changes clearly for political cause. For the most part, the new men resembled their predecessors socially and economically.
A STUDY OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION OF 1776
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MAY 1776 CONVENTION

The delegates who assembled at the Virginia convention in May of 1776 ended British rule in Virginia. They instructed their delegates at the Continental Congress to move for independence. They then set about adopting a Declaration of Rights and writing a constitution for the new state of Virginia. Who were these men? What motivated them to adopt a resolution supporting independence, an action which four previous conventions had avoided? Had events since the last convention in December 1775 changed the minds of those who traditionally held power in Virginia, or had the Virginia voters in the spring elections replaced them with a more radical set of delegates for the May meeting?

Thirty-nine of the one hundred and thirty delegates who sat in the May 1776 convention had been elected for the first time. Although they had been active on the local level, their various constituencies had never sent them to any previous convention. The importance of the May meeting renders the identity of these new men and the way in which they were elected central to the story of the American Revolution in Virginia. If the delegates were novices in Virginia politics and/or differed markedly from the previous
delegates whom they replaced, their presence at the May
convention would represent a significant upset in the
political tradition of Virginia, as well as a quickening
in the colony's desire for independence. The purpose of
this thesis is to study the new men at the convention and
the delegates they replaced. First, however, it is impor­t­
ant to review the political climate in Virginia and her
sister colonies in the months immediately prior to inde­
pendence. Relations between Britain and the colonies had
been deteriorating for several years, but a series of
events in late 1775 and early 1776 gave a new direction to
the colonial struggle against the mother country.

In Virginia, feelings between the colonists and their
colonial governor, Lord Dunmore, had reached the point
where Dunmore, fearing for his safety, had boarded a
British man-of-war in the summer of 1775, and the burges­s­
eses had ceased to function as a legislative body. Dunmore
unwittingly aided the cause of independence by plundering
plantations in the Chesapeake area and issuing a proclam­
atation on November 17, 1775, offering freedom to any slaves
of the rebels who joined him and took up arms against their
masters.\(^3\) In control of the Norfolk area, Dunmore and his
men had an accessible base from which to operate and a
ready source of supplies. Alarmed by this situation, the
Committee of Safety sent troops to Norfolk to oppose the
governor. The colonial troops routed the British in the
battle of Great Bridge and occupied Norfolk.\(^4\) On New Year's
Day Dunmore retaliated by bombarding the town. Instead of smothering the fires which resulted, colonial troops spread the flames and engaged in widespread looting. The greater part of Norfolk's destruction was caused by local troops, but Dunmore received the blame for all of the damage.\(^5\) Supporters of independence reasoned correctly that Dunmore's actions would destroy the hopes for reconciliation with Britain still entertained by many Virginians. George Washington wrote to Joseph Reed on January 31st that "a few more of such flaming arguments, as were exhibited at Falmouth [the present Portland, Maine, which the British navy had bombarded] and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation."\(^6\)

Washington was on duty in Massachusetts during Dunmore's incursions. Congress had recently voted to raise a continental army of 20,000 men to be enlisted until the end of 1776. However, that congressional move did not represent a majority desire for independence on the part of the membership at the Continental Congress.\(^7\) But events were soon to change the minority who supported independence into a majority.

On January 9 Thomas Paine's publication *Common Sense* appeared. Written in a language that the common man could understand, the pamphlet called for independence. "Tis time to Part," wrote Paine. The blood of the slain and everything
that was "right or reasonable" called for separation. Paine challenged the divine right of kings, calling William the Conqueror a French bastard who established himself with armed banditti without the consent of the people. William's rule "certainly hath no divinity in it," stated Paine. He answered most economic and political arguments for remaining under Britain. So persuasive and popular was the pamphlet that within three weeks 120,000 copies were sold throughout the colonies.

Common Sense changed the minds of many individuals, but it was not the single force which persuaded the colonists. On February 26 news of the Prohibitory Act arrived. The act declared that all American vessels and cargoes were subject to seizure and forfeiture to the crown. Britain now considered the colonies in the class with declared enemies. Accompanying a copy of the act were letters reporting that commissioners would be sent to treat with the colonists and that an army of 20,000 would be sent to America of whom part were to be stationed in the southern colonies.

Supporters of separation welcomed the Prohibitory Act. Richard Henry Lee stated that it was "curious to observe, that whilst people here are disputing and hesitating about independency, the court by one bold Act of Parliament... have already put the two Countries asunder." The act shocked men who hoped for reconciliation, but many held to the hope that the commissioners would bring about an acceptable settlement.
On March 18 the Continental Congress accepted a resolution calling for the issuance of letters of marque to privateers. Virginia had already opened her ports to the world in January of 1776, and her delegates joined with those of four New England colonies, New York, and North Carolina in supporting the move. Virginia delegates Richard Henry Lee and George Wythe proposed a preamble to the privateering act in question which placed the blame for the colonies' distress on the king and not his ministry. Although the preamble was defeated, the tide was turning against the opponents of independence in Congress and throughout the colonies.

News that Britain had tried to recruit Russian soldiers for service in America reached the colonies in mid-March, adding to the growing disillusionment with the mother country. Information on Britain's eventual success in hiring foreign troops did not reach America until May 20, by which time the idea of independence had captured the minds of people throughout the colonies. Samuel Adams, writing to Dr. Samuel Cooper on April 31, stated:

The ideas of Independence spread far and wide among the Colonies. Many of the leading Men see the absurdity of supposing that Allegiance is due to a Sovereign who has already thrown us out of his Protection. South Carolina has lately assumed a new Government. The convention of North Carolina has unanimously agreed to do the same...Virginia whose Convention is to meet on the third of next month will follow the lead. The Body of the People of Maryland are firm...Some of the principal Members of their Convention are timid and lukewarm...The lower Counties on Delaware are a small People but well affected to the Common Cause. In this populous
and wealthy Colony political Parties run high. The News papers are full of the Matter but I think I may assure you that Common Sense, prevails among the people...The Jerseys are agitating the great Question. It is with them rather a Matter of Prudence whether to determine till some others have done it before them...their Sentiments & Manners are I believe similar to those of N England...I forbear to say anything of New York for I confess I am not able to form any opinion of them...I have not mentioned our little Sister Georgia; but I believe she is as warmly engaged in the Cause as any of us, & will do as much as can be reasonably expected of her.

Adams attributed the change in feeling to the Boston Port Bill of 1774 which brought about a union of the colonies that would not have come about with reasoning the necessity "of it for the Common Safety." Adams also felt that the burning of Norfolk and hostilities in North Carolina turned the southerners to the cause of independence. One battle in the South with British troops Adams felt, would do more toward a declaration of independence "than a long chain of conclusive Arguments in a provincial Convention or the Continental Congress." 15

Virginia's delegates in the Continental Congress had put forth arguments for independence early in 1776. George Wythe in February had stated before Congress that the colonies should declare themselves a free people. 16 By April the Virginia electorate had caught up with Wythe and the other Virginia delegates in Congress. Common Sense was read throughout the colony. Jefferson received a copy in Virginia from Thomas Nelson, Jr., in February. Sounding out people in his area before returning to Congress, he left Albemarle
convinced that nine-tenths of the inhabitants in the northern sections favored independence. Residents in other regions reported strong sentiment for the idea. John Lee in Essex County wrote Richard Henry Lee that "independence is now the topic here, and I think I am not mistaken when I say it will (if not already) be very soon a Favourite Child." Letters appeared in the Virginia Gazette stating that the "independence of the Colonies daily becomes more and more a topic of very anxious disquisition." A traveler in Virginia wrote from Petersburg, "In my way through Virginia, I found the inhabitants warm for independence...indeed, I hear nothing praised but Common Sense and independence."

Reports of the effect of Common Sense reached George Washington in Massachusetts. Writing to Joseph Reed on April 1, the general stated, "My countrymen I know, from their form of government, and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independence, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters, which I have lately received from Virginia, I find 'Common Sense' is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men." Delegates at the Continental Congress began to receive pleas from home. Charles Lee wrote to Richard Henry Lee on April 5, "For God's sake why do you dawdle in the Congress so strangely? Why do you not at once declare yourselves a separate independent State?" From John Page Jefferson
received the admonition: "For God's sake declare the Colonies independent, at once, and save us from ruin."  

Some individuals felt that a declaration of independence without an alliance with a foreign power would be the ruin of the colonies. Patrick Henry held the view that France would join with Great Britain against the colonies if independence was declared before an alliance was solidified. George Wythe disagreed. He felt that France had nothing to gain by aiding the colonies unless they declared themselves a free people. He was joined in his opinions by fellow Virginian John Augustine Washington, who was "clearly of the opinion that unless we declare openly for independency there is no chance for foreign aid."  

In Virginia the question of foreign aid was overtaken by events. Elections for the May convention were held in April. Although there are no exacts accounts of how the elections proceeded, they probably followed the pattern of elections to the House of Burgesses. The sheriff fixed the date and time of the election. Property qualifications for voting stipulated that for a year previous to the election, an individual had to have owned twenty-five acres with a house and plantation upon it, or one hundred acres of unoccupied land, or a lot and a house in a town. Candidates were expected to provide refreshments for the freeholders who selected the representatives, usually from among the gentry. An election could be challenged in the House of Burgesses, but the members were reluctant to overturn the
decision of the county sheriff who determined the election results. The sheriff generally was a member of the aristocracy, and burgesses were hesitant to offend a member of their own class. If a disputed election occurred, the Committee of Privileges and Elections of the House of Burgesses conducted an investigation.27

When the delegates assembled in convention, it was widely expected that they would vote for independence. James McClurg wrote Jefferson that "the notion of independence had spread fast in Virginia and would be adopted by a majority at the convention."28 John Page informed Richard Henry Lee that every man except Robert Carter Nicholas would declare for independence.29 Edmund Randolph, a delegate to the convention, reflected in later years that Common Sense put the torch to the combustibles in the colony and because of the pamphlet perhaps a majority of the counties sent their delegates with instructions to vote for independence.30

The stage was set when the delegates assembled on May 6 in Williamsburg. A majority of the representatives favored separation. South Carolina and Rhode Island had already created new governments foreshadowing the call of the Continental Congress on May 10 for the colonies to assume sovereign powers. North Carolina had instructed her delegates in Congress to support a resolution calling for independence, and Richard Henry Lee had urged Virginians to set an example by creating a government and "sending peremptory Orders to
their delegates to pursue the most effectual measures for the Security of America."\(^{31}\) On the 15th of May, the convention, after much debate, accepted the resolution of Edmund Pendleton, president of the convention, which read in part:

Resolved unanimously, That the delegates appointed to represent this colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent states....

Resolved unanimously, That a committee be appointed to prepare a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, and such a plan of government as will be most likely to maintain peace and order in this colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the people.\(^{32}\)

The vote on the resolution was unanimous with the exception of Robert Carter Nicholas who abstained but promised to rise and fall with his country.\(^{33}\) The next day the soldiers paraded in Waller's Grove before Brigadier General Andrew Lewis, the Committee of Safety, members of the convention, and residents of Williamsburg. According to a newspaper account, the resolution was read to the army, and toasts were given to: "1. The American independent states; 2. The Grand Congress of the United States, and their respective legislatures; 3. General Washington and victory to the American arms." The Grand Union Flag of the American states flew over the capitol during the parade. The soldiers drank refreshments provided for them, and the evening "concluded with illuminations and other demonstrations of joy; every one seemed pleased that the domination of Great Britain was now at an end...."\(^{34}\)
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


2 The first convention was held in August of 1774. There are no records of the meeting. Conventions were also held in March, July, and December of 1775.

3 Dunmore managed to organize a regiment of runaway slaves known as Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment. Another regiment composed of Loyalists was called the Queen's Own Loyal Virginia Regiment. Isaac S. Harrell, Loyalism in Virginia (Durham, N.C., 1926), 40.

4 The bridge, known as "Great Bridge," was a structure over the Elizabeth River, twelve miles from Norfolk. David J. Mays, Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803 (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), II, 56-75.

5 Ibid., 82-84; Merrill Jensen, The Founding of a Nation (New York, 1968), 645.


7 Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 635-636, 651, 652.

8 Moncure D. Conway, ed., The Writings of Thomas Paine, (New York, 1894), I, 89.

9 Ibid., 80.

10 Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 669.


12 Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 655.
Ibid., 659.

Ibid., 670.


Dumas Malone, Jefferson and His Time, Volume one: Jefferson the Virginian (Boston, 1948), 217.


A. B. to Alexander Purdie, April 5, 1776, presumably from the Virginia Gazette, in Hazelton, Declaration of Independence, 73.

Anonymous letter from Petersburg, April 12, 1776, presumably from the Virginia Gazette, in Hazelton, Declaration of Independence, 73.

To Joseph Reed, April 1, 1776, Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, IV, 455.

Charles Lee to Richard H. Lee, April 5, 1776, in Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 671.


Butterfield, Adams' Diary, II, 229.


For the best accounts of elections in colonial Virginia, see Charles Sydnor, Gentlemen Freeholders (Chapel Hill, 1952); Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience (New York, 1964), III, 118; the May convention also had a Committee of Privileges and Elections which concerned itself primarily with the validity of elections and "alleged instances of individual Virginians manifesting disloyalty to the patriot cause." W.T. Hutchinson
and M.E. Rachal, eds., The Papers of James Madison (Chicago, 1962-), I, 165-166n; there is evidence that suffrage was not restricted to a fifty-acre freehold in colonial Virginia. Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing, Mich., 1964), 136-150; it is not clear what were the exact qualifications for voting for the May convention. Jensen in Founding of a Nation, 521, states that voting was more open in the selection of the committees of safety in 1775. It does not appear that he thought this continued as the July convention restricted suffrage to the fifty-acre freehold.


29 John Page to Richard H. Lee, April 12, 1776, in Hazelton, Declaration of Independence, 72.

30 Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 669.


32 There were at least three resolutions considered before a final resolution was approved. Pendleton's was a compromise resolution. Mays, Pendleton, II, 106-109.

33 Jensen, Founding of a Nation, 680.

34 Hazelton, Declaration of Independence, 80.
CHAPTER II
HISTORIANS AND THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION OF 1776

The Virginia convention of May 1776 has understandably drawn the attention of historians. The presence of a significant number of new faces has led some writers to assert that the change in membership signified a change in the political and social climate in Virginia. Other historians have been content to glorify the convention and those present. In both cases, writers have often made generalizations about the membership on the basis of a few unsubstantiated contemporary observations or a very random examination of the delegates.

The first account of the meeting was by Hugh Blair Grigsby.1 Presented in 1855 as a lecture to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, his book emphasized biographical data on the members. Grigsby bemoaned the fact that there was little information in print on most of the men since "the rise, progress and consummation of the Revolution are most intimately connected with the individual character and personal influence of the men who were engaged in it."2 Grigsby wrote in the flowery style of his age and found no blemishes in the men or their cause. "A more magnificent heritage no people ever shared, or ever descended from a purer source."3
The Virginians did not choose to separate from Britain. They were driven to the sword by British oppression, and they "committed their cause to the God of Battles."

Grigsby is a valuable source of information as he had early access to family documents and had acquired first-hand information from a few of the members. Flawed by subjectivity and outdated as an historical account of the Revolution, the Virginia Convention of 1776 still has to be considered in any study of the convention.

Another nineteenth-century historian, George Bancroft, also addressed himself to the May convention. In his History of the United States of America he portrayed the convention members as "one hundred and thirty of the ablest men in Virginia." They were no rash enthusiasts for liberty nor men who wanted independence for the sake of change. Instead, "they were the choice of the freeholders of Virginia, and the majority were men of independent fortune, or even opulence." Bancroft described the physical features of the men by stating that most were of "large stature and robust frames" and a great proportion of them lived to an exceedingly old age. Unanimity prevailed in Virginia in Bancroft's idealized account. He characterized the colony in this way: "Driven to the choice between holding their constitutional rights on sufferance or creating a government by the people, Virginia, with a unity of spirit, asked no questions about ancestry or creed, nearness to the sea or to the mountains. When it moved, it moved
altogether." 6

Bancroft's view of unanimity preceding the Revolution was not shared by the Progressive historians of the early twentieth century who emphasized the conflicting views of conservative/radical factions in Virginia and other colonies, and stressed the victory of the radicals as a major change in the political life of the colony. Charles and Mary Beard, for example, discussed the division between conservative and radical in Virginia. Although they did not deal exclusively with the colony, the Beards concluded that planters on the seaboard and farmers in the interior were locked in a "struggle which involved nothing less than a revolution in the social order of the Old Dominion with its Established Church and its landed aristocracy." The Beards stated that many old families on the coastal plain hated Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson more than they hated the English. 7 They also concluded that no more than one-third of the adult white males set their seal of approval on the Revolution by voting for committeemen and delegates. 8

Hamilton Eckenrode focused specifically on the colony in his study on The Revolution in Virginia in which he interpreted the conventions as conflicts between conservatives and progressives. According to his view, the conservatives controlled the March 1775 convention and the Committee of Safety, but lost out to the progressives in the May 1776 meeting. In Eckenrode's opinion, separation was fatal to the conservative cause. 9

Isaac Harrell supported Eckenrode's contention that the
conventions of August 1774 and March 1775 were under the domination of the conservatives. He concluded that the radicals won their first victory at the third convention in July of 1775 with the exclusion of dissident clergy and teachers from voting in the elections for committees of safety. Harrell did not portray a radical/conservative split after the July convention. Presumably the radicals won out in late 1775 and early 1776.

A more recent Progressive work was Merrill Jensen's *Founding of a Nation* which stated that "Virginians were no more united on the subject of independence than the people of the other colonies." Citing the case of the Randolph family, Jensen noted that the Randolphs were "by no means the only family in Virginia or in the other colonies to be split in 1776." He also contended that some men believed that a revolution was occurring in the social and political life and for this reason feared an independence in which they might be supplanted by men they considered to be inferior. Jensen used Landon Carter's obvious disgust at the results of the April elections to reflect the uneasiness some planters felt toward events in the spring of 1776. Jensen did not conclude that a social revolution occurred during elections to the May convention. He did contend that a minor revolution occurred in voting in 1775 when the county committees were first selected. Little or no attention was paid to voter qualifications until the July convention of 1775 called for annual elections for the
committees and stipulated that the suffrage was limited to
freeholders voting in burgess elections. 13

Dumas Malone, writing much later than most Progressives,
stressed the conflicts existing at the March 1775 convention.
Although the conservatives objected to the timing of the
development, they could not restrain the citizens from arm-
ing-the-colony. They also suspected Patrick Henry of deeper
designs when he proposed that the Committee of Safety assume
the full powers of government, and they vetoed the idea.
Still, the conservatives maintained control and the March
convention "was not a revolutionary gathering after all." 14
Since Thomas Jefferson, the subject of Malone's biographi-
cal study, was in Philadelphia at the time of the December
and May conventions, Malone did not treat the conventions
in depth.

Questions concerning the elections to the May convention
arise in the biographical works of Kate Rowland and Irving
Brant. Both authors' references to the April elections
reflect assumptions which are not supported by the evidence.
In her biography of George Mason, Rowland stated that "there
seems to have been no small competition for seats in its
convention councils." 15 She found her view reflected in a
letter from Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee on the 28th
of April:

In many counties there have been warm contests for
seats in our Approaching convention. Many new ones
are got in. The paper will partly inform you of the
changes. Col. Mason with great difficulty return'd
Rowland did not discuss the contents of the letter except for the section dealing with her subject, Mason. She seemed to accept the interpretation that Blackbourne, Marshall, and Carter were defeated in elections. Actually, Thomas Marshall was on military duty at the time of the convention and could not attend. Thomas Blackbourne may have been on duty, and Cuthbert Bullett was his brother-in-law, an unlikely contestant for his seat in convention. There is no definite evidence that Charles Carter was defeated in Stafford although this may have been the case.17

In his biographical work on James Madison, Irving Brant contended that there was a "quickened interest" in the selection of delegates in the spring of 1776 and that "deeply-lying social cleavages were present in the laments of the defeated."18 Brant used Landon Carter's complaints for evidence. Carter had written in his diary on May 1, 1776:

I have just heard A certain G.R., when asked to lend his fire lock to go against the tender, asked the People if they were such fools to go to protect the Gentlemen's houses on the river side; he thought it would be better if they were burnt down. This it seems a Gentlemen heard and told to a Committee man; and though we have had a Committee since no Notice was ever taken of it. The old deligates were left out, for this very Purpose and these new ones chose for this Very Purpose of an entire independence in which no Gentlemen should have the least share. Hurray for Independency, Sedition, and Confusion.19
Carter's son Robert Wormeley Carter and Francis Lightfoot Lee had been defeated by two men, one of whom Carter considered "a worthless, impudent fellow" and the other "a most silly though good natured fool." However, Carter himself was not even a candidate for convention, so he was not among "the defeated" as Brant implied.

Brant's account of the convention membership was also exaggerated. He stated that "when the returns were in, it was found that the strongest men Virginia could assemble, save for absentees in the army or in Congress were coming together for the great work in prospect." Brant described the gathering as one in which "fine coats and lace cuffs could be found next to the rudest homespun or deerskin." The juxtaposition of attire was colorfully descriptive but perhaps inaccurate since Brant himself admitted that the account cited described the 1783-1784 assembly, not the May convention.

Brant's account revealed that he did not do a thorough county study of the elections before drawing conclusions.

Counties unrepresented in the 1775 convention sent delegations. Many places were open to new delegates because the old ones were in the military service. Aristocrats and democrats contended for place. George Mason, master spirit of the convention, barely escaped defeat in Fairfax County, perhaps because an extra touch of gout made him more than usually irascible. Carter Braxton, aristocrat with a wife suspected of Toryism, was beaten two to one in King William County but received a certificate of election from Sheriff Owen Gwathmey, Gent., because the high candidate had said before election that he did not want the place. Madison was on the committee which overruled the sheriff.
The description of the King William election was accurate but incomplete as Braxton was finally elected to the convention. In 1775, moreover, there were three conventions, not one. Only Fincastle, Accomac, the borough of Norfolk, and the College had sent delegates to the May 1776 convention but not to the December convention, the last held in 1775. Two of these areas, Accomac and the borough of Norfolk, could not send delegates in December because of the activity of the British in the Chesapeake area. Inasmuch as Accomac, Fincastle, and Norfolk had sent representatives to previous conventions, they were not totally unrepresented in 1775.

Brant's contention that social cleavages were present in the May convention has been challenged by Robert and Katherine Brown who stated that "there was little if any 'revolution' in representation" in Virginia during the Revolution. In discussing the elections to the May meeting, the Browns' work is another example of historians using a quotation without thorough documentation. They too employed the letter of Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee used by Rowland to assert:

While many representatives won easily in 1776, there were 'warm contests' in some counties just as there had been before the Revolution. George Mason in Fairfax and Henry Lee of Prince William were 'much push'd' to win; the other Prince William incumbent, Thomas Blackburn was replaced by Cuthbert Bullitt; William Brent defeated Charles Carter from Stafford, and Martin Prichet [sic] displaced Thomas Marshall in Fauquier. Furthermore, the men who replaced the defeated candidates were usually of the same general social position, as had been the case before 1776.
Although the Browns did not state that Marshall and Blackburn were defeated, they implied that the men lost at the polls. They also did not cite any evidence for altering the quotation from "Will Brent for Stafford in Room of Charles Carter" to read "William Brent defeated Charles Carter from Stafford."

It is clear that historians have been content to draw conclusions about the significance of the May 1776 elections and the delegates involved without thorough documentation. The following chapter consequently will attempt to answer these questions: Who were the delegates to the December and May conventions? Why did changes occur where they did? Were the election results a departure from the county's political leadership patterns? Were the delegates to the December convention replaced by men who differed greatly from them in political experience and social standing?
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 There are only two works which deal specifically with the Virginia convention of May 1776: Hugh Blair Grigsby, *The Virginia Convention of 1776* (Richmond, 1855) and Robert L. Hilldrip, *The Virginia Convention of 1776: A Study of Revolutionary Politics* (unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1935). Grigsby deals primarily with the delegates while Hilldrip concentrates on the work of the convention.


3 Ibid., 193.

4 Ibid., 191.


8 Ibid., 256-257.


12 Jensen, *Founding of a Nation*, 663.

13 Ibid., 521-522.


15 Kate M. Rowland, *The Life of George Mason* (New York, 1892), I, 222.

16 Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee, April 28, 1776, Lee Family Papers, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, Virginia, cited in Rowland, Ibid. I would like to thank Dr. Dale Benson of Southwestern College at Memphis for bringing the original of this quotation to my attention.
For accounts of these elections, see the county interpretations for Fauquier, Prince William, and Stafford Counties.

Irving Brant, James Madison (Indianapolis, 1941-1953), I, 197.


Brant, Madison, I, 197.

Brant, Madison, I, 202-203.

Brant, Madison, I, 197.

See King William County interpretation and biographies.

Eckenrode in Revolution in Virginia, 127, refers specifically to the difficulties of the Accomac Delegates. It is assumed that the Norfolk delegates would have had difficulty in attending the convention for the same reason.

CHAPTER III

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF CHANGES IN DELEGATIONS AT THE DECEMBER AND MAY CONVENTIONS

The following is a county by county study of the changes that occurred in the delegations of thirty-three counties between the December 1775 and May 1776 meetings of the Virginia convention. The counties are presented alphabetically with an analysis of the change followed by biographies of the representatives in December and May. Excluded are new delegates in May who attended a meeting prior to the convention in December. In two counties, Fauquier and King and Queen, comparisons are made between delegates at the May convention and men they replaced who attended the March and July 1775 meetings. The counties only sent one delegate in December since his colleague was in the military. The addition of new men in May brought the counties' delegations back up to two men each. In all, there are thirty-eight biographies of December delegates and thirty-nine biographies of new men in May.
AMHERST COUNTY

In Amherst County Gabriel Penn replaced Joseph Cabell as a county delegate to the May convention. Cabell had sat in the three previous conventions but did not attend in May because he was paying claimants of the 1774 Indian expedition in the counties of Pittsylvania, Augusta, Botetourt, and Fincastle. Appointed on January 8, 1776, by the December convention, Cabell did not return from his journey to those areas until the May meeting was in session.\(^1\) The presence of Gabriel Penn as his replacement most likely did not signify any change in the political traditions of the county, since the two men served together in 1776 as the county's first representatives to the House of Delegates.\(^2\)

Amherst and Buckingham Counties were formed from Albemarle in 1761.\(^3\) Joseph Cabell's family was prominent in the politics of the three counties from their early history until the nineteenth century. The family was established in the area by William Cabell, Sr., who migrated to Virginia from England. A surgeon by training, he served as a justice of the peace, a deputy sheriff, and surveyor in Virginia and became a planter with holdings totaling 26,000 acres by 1753. His oldest son, William Cabell of "Union Hill,"
represented Albemarle in the House of Burgesses from 1758 until 1761 when he became a burgess from Amherst, serving as its representative continuously from 1761 through all of the revolutionary conventions. From 1772 he represented the county with his brother Joseph. A member of the colonial Committee of Safety, William Cabell, Jr., was a very wealthy man whose land holdings amounted to 15,237 acres by 1788. In addition to William, Jr., and Joseph, John Cabell sat in the meeting of May 1776, representing Buckingham. Another brother, Nicholas, served in the military during the Revolution under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette.

The Cabells maintained their positions in the Piedmont's politics after the Revolution. Cabells represented the counties of Buckingham and Albemarle in the House and Senate. With the exception of three years, a Cabell held the office of state senator from Albemarle continuously from 1776 until 1830.

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2 Earl G. Swem and John W. Williams, eds., A Register of the General Assembly of Virginia 1776-1918 and of the Constitutional Conventions (Richmond, 1918), 354.

3 John W. Gwathmey, Twelve Virginia Counties (Richmond, 1937), 310.
Joseph Cabell

Joseph Cabell (1732-1798) held the county offices befitting a man of his social position. He was a justice of the peace, a vestryman, and a burgess from Buckingham County from 1761 until 1771 when he switched to Amherst County, representing it from 1772 until 1775. He signed the three mercantile associations of 1769, 1770, and 1774 and sat in the August, March, July, and December conventions.

Cabell became active in the military affairs of the county by serving as a lieutenant in the company which marched with Patrick Henry toward Williamsburg to protest against the removal of the gun powder by Lord Dunmore. He continued to participate in the military within Amherst by serving as colonel in the militia, 1775-1781, and as county lieutenant in 1778. Along with Gabriel Penn, who
replaced him in the May convention, he administered the oath of allegiance within the county in 1777.  

Cabell represented Amherst in the House of Delegates in 1776 and 1778, but in 1780 he became a representative for Buckingham County.  

A wealthy man, Cabell owned 5,160 acres of land in Buckingham, Amherst, and Fluvanna counties along with sixty-six slaves, twenty horses, and one hundred and twenty-two cattle.

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4 Sweeney, Amherst County, 32.  

5 John H. Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution (Richmond, 1938), 119; Sweeney, Amherst County, 32.  

6 Sweeney, Amherst County, 80.  

7 Cabell sat in the House of Delegates in 1776 and 1778 for Amherst and 1780-81, 1787-88, and 1788 for Buckingham. He represented Buckingham in the Senate in 1781-82, 1782, 1783, 1784-85, 1785-86; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 357.  

8 These figures come from tax lists covering 1787-88. Jackson T. Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, XI (1953), 371.
Nothing significant is known about the life of Gabriel Penn prior to the Revolutionary period. After 1775 he held several important positions, indicating that he was probably a member of the county's ruling class. A member of the committee of safety for Amherst in 1775, Penn served as undersheriff in 1776 and as justice of the peace in 1777. Of all the revolutionary conventions, he attended only the one in May of 1776. He replaced Joseph Cabell with whom he administered the oath of allegiance within the county in 1777.

Penn was active in the county militia. In 1769 he was a lieutenant, but he rose in rank to become a captain in 1775, a major in 1780, and a lieutenant colonel in 1782. He was also a paymaster of the Buckingham battalion, 1775-1776.

Penn represented Amherst in the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1778. Two of his three terms he represented the county with Joseph Cabell. He became sheriff of the county in 1780. The only information on his personal life is an advertisement in the Virginia Gazette in March of 1771 for a plantation in Amherst which included two tailor shops and three blacksmith shops.

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1 Sweeney, Amherst County, 2; The proceedings of the Convention of delegates, held at the Capitol, in the city of Williamsburg..., on Monday the 6th of May, 1776. Printed by


5 Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 416.

6 Sweeny, *Amherst County*, 88, 89.

7 Purdie and Dixon, *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), March 21, 1771.
BOTETOURT COUNTY

In Botetourt County Patrick Lockhart served in the convention in place of Andrew Lewis who was on duty with the Continental Army.\(^1\) There was no dramatic change in the representation of Botetourt. A western county, it was formed from Augusta in 1769.\(^2\) With the exception of Lockhart's presence in the May convention, Andrew Lewis and John Bowyer represented the county from 1772 through the 1776 convention.\(^3\) Although Lockhart was not as prominent as Lewis, his occupation as a merchant was not a detriment; socially or politically, in the frontier area of the colony.

\(^1\)Frances B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution* (Washington, D.C., 1914), 348.


\(^3\)Stanard, ed., *Colonial Register*, 185, 187, 190, 192, 195, 198, 201, 203, 205, 208. Bowyer was the only representative in the July 1775 convention. He also represented Botetourt in 1770-71 when the county was first organized and admitted to the House of Burgesses.
Andrew Lewis (1720-1781) was a member of a prominent frontier family. His father, John Lewis, helped to found the town of Staunton and to organize Augusta County.\(^1\) Andrew Lewis served as a justice of the peace from 1765 until 1774 and as a burgess in the 1772-1774 and 1775 assemblies.\(^2\) He also represented Botetourt at the conventions of March and December 1775.\(^3\)

Lewis gained renown in Virginia through his military career. A county lieutenant, Lewis served as a major in the French and Indian War and surrendered at Fort Necessity with George Washington. In 1768 Lewis helped draft the treaty of Fort Stanwix, and in 1774 as a brigadier general led his troops in defeat of the Indians in the Battle of Point Pleasant in Dunmore's War. Commissioned brigadier general by Congress on March 1, 1776, Lewis assumed command of the troops stationed in Williamsburg and in July drove Governor Dunmore from Gwyn's Island.\(^4\) He resigned his commission in 1777 when Congress did not promote him.\(^5\) Lewis continued to serve Virginia in the local forces.\(^6\) He also acted as a commissioner at the treaty of Fort Pitt in 1778 and sat on the Executive Council of Governor Thomas Jefferson from 1779 until 1781.\(^7\)

A wealthy man, Lewis in his will left 2,000 acres of land to his son William and 30,000 acres to be divided among his other children.\(^8\) Much of his property was acquired through military service.
1See Robert L. Meriwether in DAB s.v. "Lewis, Andrew."; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 277; Andrew Lewis's brothers were also prominent men in their area. Thomas Lewis was a county surveyor, burgess from Augusta County, a commissioner at the treaty of Fort Pitt, a representative to the convention of May 1776, and a member of the House of Delegates. With the exception of Charles Lewis, who died at the Battle of Point Pleasant, all of the Lewis brothers served in the military during the French and Indian War and the Revolution. J. A. Peyton, History of Augusta County, 2nd ed. (Bridgewater, Virginia, 1953), 286; Grigsby, Virginia Convention, 110-112.


4Peyton, Augusta County, 12.


6See Robert L. Meriwether in DAB s.v. "Lewis, Andrew."

7Peyton, Augusta County, 187.

8Ibid., 335.

9Freeman, Washington, III, 300.

Patrick Lockhart
Botetourt

A merchant in Fincastle, Botetourt County, Patrick Lockhart (ca.1749 - ca.1810) served as a justice of the peace in 1773 and as a delegate to the convention of May 1776. In 1778 the State Board of War appointed him to provide wagons and blankets for the frontier skirmishes,
and on June 11, Congress appointed him to procure the necessities for the expedition against Detroit. ²

Lockhart was a member of the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1778 and the sheriff of Botetourt in 1784 and 1785.³ Governor Benjamin Harrison appointed him in 1782 as commissioner in charge of stores in Botetourt and three adjoining counties. He also acted as trustee for clearing the James River in 1783 and as trustee for Fincastle Academy in 1785.⁴ In the militia, Lockhart served as a major during the Revolution and advanced to colonel in 1788.⁵ With the exception of 582 acres of land in Culpeper valued at £174.12s in 1782, Lockhart's land holdings are unknown.⁶

¹Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, 252n.1; There are early references to Lockharts in the county. A James Lockhart was a vestryman and church warden in 1746, and a Randall Lockhart was a trustee for the town of Staunton at its incorporation in 1761. Their relation to Patrick Lockhart is unknown. Peyton, Augusta County, 96, 256; David J. Mays, ed., The Papers of Edmund Pendleton (Charlottesville, 1967), I, 90; Kellogg and Thwaites, eds., Dunmore's War, 182, 184; Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 252n.l; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 122; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.


³Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 399; W. P. Palmer and S. McRae, eds., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts...Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond (Richmond, 1875-1893), IV, 536.
4 W. W. Henning, ed., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia From the First Session...in the Year 1619 (Richmond, 1809-1823), XI, 341, XII, 202.

5 Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 252n.1.

6 Culpeper Land Book, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.
BUCKINGHAM COUNTY

Thomas Patterson was not present at the May convention because he was in the military. Since he was Buckingham's only delegate to the December meeting, it is impossible to judge whether Charles Patteson or John Cabell, the delegates to the May convention, was his replacement. The two men were logical selections in the Piedmont county which strongly supported independence. Cabell and Patteson carried the following instructions from Buckingham County to Williamsburg in May of 1776:

We, therefore, your constituents, recommend to, 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 providence, that, as far as in your power, you cause such instructions to be given to the Delegates from this Colony to the Continental Congress.... 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.2

None of the representatives to the December and May conventions appeared as delegates before those meetings. Given the revolutionary fervor within the county, it is possible that the voters sent men to the last two meetings who were known proponents of independence. If this were the case, the change within Buckingham took place earlier
than April of 1776. However, the election of new men still did not signify an overthrow of the gentry class. Patteson was a doctor while Cabell was a member of the prominent Cabell family and his brother Joseph had represented the county in the House of Burgesses from 1761 until 1771.\footnote{Heitman, ed., Historical Register of the Revolution, 429.}

\footnote{Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 458-461.}

\footnote{Stenard, ed., Colonial Register, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 171, 174, 176, 178, 180, 183, 185, 187.}
Thomas Patterson (d. ca. 1776) was a justice of the peace for Buckingham County in 1772 and 1774. When the committee of deputies met to organize a battalion of men, Patterson was selected as the commissary of masters. He served in the convention of December 1775 and became captain of the Sixth Virginia Regiment on February 24, 1776. Although his exact land holdings are unknown, Patterson was a planter.

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1 Patterson's and Patteson's last names are spelled as they are listed on convention rolls. There are many different spellings (Paterson, Pattison, Patteson, Pattesson) given for both men. There is no proof of any relation between the two.

2 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 113, 127.

3 On July 17, 1775, the convention required that a battalion of Minute Men be organized in each district. Buckingham, Amherst, Albemarle, and Augusta were designated as one district and deputies were appointed from each county to meet and organize the area. The men chose officers for the regular service, divided the area into companies, and chose officers for the Minute Men. Brock, ed., Gilmer Papers, 110-112.


Charles Patteson was a justice of the peace in 1765, 1767, 1772, and 1774 and coroner of Buckingham in 1774.¹ As a delegate from Buckingham to the committee of deputies in September of 1775, he helped organize a battalion of men from the Buckingham district.² Patteson represented his county in the May 1776 convention and continued to serve in the House of Delegates 1776, 1777, 1781-82, 1782, 1782-1785, 1787-1788.³ He was a doctor by profession.⁴

²Brock; ed., Gilmer Papers, 110, 111.
³Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 1509; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 415.

John Cabell

John Cabell (d. ca.1815) was the third son of William Cabell,¹ and the brother of Joseph and William Cabell. He served as justice of the peace in 1767, 1772, and 1774 and sat on the Buckingham committee of safety.² Along
with Charles Patteson and another representative, he met with the deputies of Amherst, Albemarle, and Augusta to organize a battalion of Minute Men in the Buckingham district. County Lieutenant in 1776 and 1782, Cabell may have been a colonel in the Buckingham militia. A member of the May 1776 convention, he continued to represent Buckingham in the House of Delegates in 1776, 1777, 1780-1781, and 1783.

1 Grigsby, Virginia Convention, 114; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 201; For more on the Cabell family, see the biography of Joseph Cabell, Amherst County.


3 Brock, ed., Gilmer Papers, 110.

4 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 212; Miscellaneous Revolutionary Box 2, Folder of Accounts for Buckingham, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 119 lists Cabell as a colonel and County Lieutenant for Buckingham in 1780. Other accounts list him only as County Lieutenant.

5 Force, ed., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 354.
CHARLOTTE COUNTY

In Charlotte County, Thomas Read replaced his brother Isaac as delegate to the May convention. Isaac Read could not be present because he was on active duty with the Fourth Virginia Regiment in Suffolk. Since the Reads were a politically prominent family in Lunenburg and Charlotte counties, Thomas Read's election to fill his brother's position was not an unexpected occurrence.

Clement Read, Sr. had sat in the House of Burgesses for Lunenburg from 1748 until his death in 1762. His son Clement Read, Jr. represented the Southside county from 1762 until 1765 when he accepted the office of coroner. Charlotte first sent delegates to the Burgesses in October 1765. Clement Read, Jr., and Paul Carrington were the representatives and continued in their positions until May of 1769 when Isaac Read replaced Clement. Isaac Read continued to serve until 1771, and Carrington served continuously from Charlotte's entry into the House of Burgesses until the last convention. Carrington had served his legal apprenticeship under Clement Read, Sr., and was the brother-in-law of Clement, Jr., Isaac, and Thomas.
Isaac Read represented Charlotte in the assemblies of 1769 and 1770 where he signed both the Associations of 1769 and 1770. He became a colonel in August of 1776 and died while in the military in 1781. For his services, the colony awarded his family 6,666 acres of land.

Read's situation financially is unknown. A lawyer by profession, he owned in 1776 one riding chair and two wheel carriages, possessions limited to the wealthy.
Thomas Read

Educated at the College of William and Mary, Thomas Read (ca. 1735-1817) served as county surveyor, justice, and deputy clerk for Charlotte prior to becoming clerk of the county in 1770, an office he held until his death.¹ A member of the county committee of safety, Read served as a delegate to the May convention of 1776 and, as county lieutenant, marched with the county militia to oppose Cornwallis.²

Read continued to serve his county in the House of Delegates in the assemblies of 1776 and 1779-1780. He also represented Charlotte in the convention of 1788 and served as trustee of Hampden-Sydney College.³ Figures of his exact land holdings are unknown, but Read owned at least 742 acres in Charlotte in 1782. Apparently, he was

¹Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 180, 183, 187; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 30, 47.
³Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 653; Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 312.
⁴"First Court of Charlotte," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, V (1923-1924), 70; "Papers From the Virginia State Auditor's Office, Now in the State Library," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXVI (1918), 156.
affluent as early as 1776, for in that year he was taxed for one riding chair and two wheel carriages.5

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1Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, II, 33; "Students in 1754 at William and Mary College," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., VI (1898), 188; Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, IV, 522; Grigsby, Virginia Convention, 106; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 65, 70, 87, 96; W. S. Morton, "Clement Reade," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., VI (1926), 242.


3Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 421; J. B. Henneman, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney," William and Mary Quarterly, VI (1898), 175.

4"Ward Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XXVII (1917-1919), 264.
CULPEPER COUNTY

French Strother replaced Henry Pendleton as a delegate from Culpeper to the May convention. Pendleton may have gone into the military, but there is no definite evidence as to why he was not a delegate to the May meeting. Both men were active in revolutionary affairs and there does not appear to have been an overthrow of the established political power in Culpeper during the April election. The county sent the same two men, Henry Field, Jr., and Henry Pendleton, to the House of Burgesses from 1769 through the last session of that body. Field and Pendleton also represented the county in all of the conventions with the exception of the May meeting in which French Strother was a delegate.¹

If Strother did defeat Pendleton in an election, it still was not a victory of the lower class over the upper class. The Strothers and Pendletons intermarried, and evidence indicates that the land holdings of the two men were about the same.

¹Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 183, 185, 187, 190, 193, 195, 198, 201, 204, 206, 208.
Henry Pendleton (1733-1798) was the son of James Pendleton, the brother of Edmund.\(^1\) He married Ann Thomas and had seven children, two of whom married members of the Strother family.\(^2\) He served as justice of the peace in 1762 and as a burgess during the sessions of 1760-1761, 1769-1771, 1772-1774, and 1775, signing the Association of 1774.\(^3\)

Pendleton participated in revolutionary activity. At the Culpeper meeting of freeholders and inhabitants called after the Boston Port Bill, Pendleton was the moderator.\(^4\) A member of the Culpeper committee of safety, Pendleton was also a delegate to the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.\(^5\) He served as a captain during the Revolution. Although his military service may have prevented him from sitting in the May convention, the lack of a date for his entering the service prevents a judgment from being made.

Henry Pendleton owned substantial acreage. He inherited the tract on which his family lived from his father in 1763. Although the amount of land is not specified in his father's will, Henry's brother Philip inherited 958 acres.\(^7\) In 1782 Pendleton was taxed by the county of Culpeper for 833 acres, valued at £ 340.0. Other Pendletons owned a combined area of 2,967 acres.\(^8\) In addition to his Culpeper holdings, Pendleton owned land in Spotsylvania County in 1767.\(^9\)
1 Harold E. Carson, "The Pendleton Genealogy," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XL, (1932), 88; Mays, Edmund Pendleton, II, 44.

2 Raleigh T. Green, Genealogical and Historical Notes on Culpeper County, Virginia (Culpeper, 1900), 97.


8 Culpeper Land Tax Book, 1782, (Virginia State Library, Richmond).

French Strother (d. 1799) began his political career in Culpeper County much nearer to the time of the Revolution than did Henry Pendleton. Since his birthdate is unknown, Strother's appearance in the early 1770's may be attributable to his youth. The little information which exists on his background indicates that he was a man of social position.

Strother was the great grandson of William Strother, burgess from King William from 1727 until 1734. He was a vestryman at St. Mark's Parish in 1772 and a justice of the peace in 1773. In May of 1776 Strother represented Culpeper at the convention in Williamsburg. He served as a city lieutenant and in 1781 became colonel in the militia. He was a church warden in 1780, sheriff in 1782, representative to the House of Delegates, 1776-1791, state senator, 1791-1800, and a delegate to the Virginia convention of 1788.

In 1761 Strother inherited his father's estate, which was valued at £1027.5s.9d. and included twenty slaves. The Culpeper Land Tax Book in 1782 listed Strother's holdings as 654 acres of land valued at £697.

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1 "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIII (1905-1906), 431.

3 Green, *Historical Notes*, 83-84; McIlwaine, ed., *Justices of the Peace*, 122.


5 Green, *Historical Notes*, 83-84; Palmer, ed., *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 602.

6 Green, *Historical Notes*, 83-84; Culpeper Land Tax Book, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia; Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 433.

7 Dörman, ed., *Will Book A*, 64, 76.

8 Culpeper Land Tax Book, 1782.
DINWIDDIE COUNTY

Bolling Starke represented Dinwiddie County at the May convention instead of Robert Ruffin who had sat in the previous meetings. Ruffin definitely was in the military during the summer of 1776, and evidence indicates that he may have been on active duty as early as March of that year, making him unavailable for convention service.\(^1\) Even if Ruffin was not in the military prior to the April elections, the pattern of the county's representatives and the character of Bolling Starke do not support the contention that his presence at the convention was an unusual occurrence in Dinwiddie politics.

Only seven men represented Dinwiddie County from its entry into the House of Burgesses in 1753 until the June session in 1775.\(^2\) John Banister, the county's other delegate to the May meeting, represented the county from October 1765 through all of the conventions, and Bolling Starke was a burgess before winning a place in the convention.\(^3\) The county initially was more conservative in the approaches it favored in the colonies' problems with England. After the Boston Port Act, when eastern and midland counties were drawing up resolutions calling for some form of action against the mother country, Dinwiddie County was one of
two counties opposed to any stern measures.  

Although Ruffin was not appointed a lieutenant colonel until the May convention was in session, a John Ruffin is listed as the Virginia officer certifying the bravery of a Robert Ward on March 16, 1776. Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 1518; "Virginia Legislative Papers," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XV (1907-1908), 159.

2Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 128, 138, 140, 144, 146, 154, 158, 172, 180, 183, 187, 190, 199.

3Ibid., 172, 180, 183, 187, 190, 199, 201, 204, 206, 208.

4Freeman, Washington, III, 361.

John Ruffin

Dinwiddie

John Ruffin was the son of Robert Ruffin who had served as a burgess for Dinwiddie in the 1758-1761 session and was a justice of the peace for the county in the 1760's. 1 John Ruffin attended the conventions of July and December 1775. Commissioned lieutenant colonel of the First Minute Battalion raised to go to the defense of North Carolina by the May convention, Ruffin resigned his commission in August of 1776 and died the following year. 2

1Writer's Program, Works Progress Administration, Dinwiddie County "The Country of the Apatmatac," (Richmond, 1942), 41; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 148, 148; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 68, 74.
Bolling Starke (1733-1788) was an established participant in Dinwiddie politics before he represented the county at the May convention.\(^1\) After serving as sheriff and justice of the peace, Starke went to the Burgesses for the 1769, 1769-1771 sessions where he signed the non-importation resolutions of 1769 and 1770.\(^2\) He also was a member of the county committee of correspondence.\(^3\)

Starke continued to represent Dinwiddie in the House of Delegates in 1776 and 1777. He returned to that body as a member from Prince George in the 1780-1781 session.\(^4\) In 1778 he sat on the Governor's Council and from 1782-1783 he was a state auditor.\(^5\)

Upon Starke's death, he owned a considerable amount of land. He left five thousand acres to his three sons and a plantation in Sussex County containing 525 acres. Legacies of Negroes, plate, tobacco, and stock were willed to his daughters.\(^6\)
Starke probably was related to Robert Bolling, burgess from Dinwiddie from 1756 until 1775. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 140, 144, 154, 168, 172, 174, 180, 183, 187, 190, 199; Writer's Program, Dinwiddie County, 41. "Historical and Genealogical Notes," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XXI (1913), 204, 205.

Starke was sheriff in 1763 and a justice from 1763 until 1776. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 68, 75, 95, 111, 112, 124; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 60.

"Historical and Genealogical Notes," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XXI (1913), 204, 205.
DUNMORE COUNTY

The change in the delegation of Dunmore to the May convention did not signify an overthrow of the established leadership in Dunmore County. Peter Muhlenburg and Jonathan Clark were not present at the convention because they were in the military. Their replacements, John Tipton and Abraham Bird, were involved in protest activities in Dunmore County and were not new to the scene in May of 1776. They were logical replacements for Clark and Muhlenburg in a western county which strongly supported the American Revolution.¹

¹For more information on the western counties during the Revolution, see Freeman H. Hart, The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1942).
Peter Muhlenburg (1746-1807) was born in Pennsylvania the son of Henry M. Muhlenburg who dominated the Lutheran church in mid-eighteenth-century America. A minister like his father, Peter Muhlenburg took up a ministry in Woodstock, Virginia, in 1772, quickly becoming involved in revolutionary activity.\(^1\) With John Tipton he was instrumental in organizing the meeting at Woodstock on June 16, 1774, which set up the county's committee of safety with Muhlenburg as chairman and passed very strong resolutions against the British in reaction to the Boston Port Act.\(^2\) He represented Dunmore in the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.\(^3\)

The December convention appointed Muhlenburg colonel of the Eighth Virginia Regiment, the "German" regiment, on January 12, 1776.\(^4\) Muhlenburg supposedly ended the last sermon to his congregation by casting off his clerical robe to reveal a military uniform underneath and announcing that he was leaving to join General Washington.\(^5\) His military career was illustrious. Brigadier general in 1777 and brevet major general in 1783, Muhlenburg received 13,194 acres of land for his services.\(^6\)

According to an unwritten law of the Church of England, a minister who bore arms was disqualified from returning to the pulpit until he was approved by the bishop. As there was no bishop in America until 1791, Muhlenburg did not
return to the ministry. He moved to Philadelphia in 1783 where he was elected to the Supreme Executive Council in 1784 and served as vice-president of Pennsylvania under Benjamin Franklin from 1783-1788. In 1788 he was congressman-at-large, and in 1790 he became a member of the state constitutional convention. Muhlenburg sat as congressman from Montgomery County, 1793-1795, and as a United States Senator in 1802. He resigned from the Senate in 1802 to become supervisor of revenue for Philadelphia.

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1 Hart, Valley of Virginia, 37; See George H. Genzmer in DAB s.v. "Muhlenburg, John Peter Gabriel."

2 John W. Wayland, The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia (Charlottesville, 1907), 142; John W. Wayland, A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia (Strasburg, Virginia, 1927), 198. For a copy of the Woodstock Resolutions, see the second reference to Wayland, p. 198.


4 Force, comp., Ibid., IV, 119.

5 Freeman, Washington, IV, 463; For more information on Muhlenburg's sermon, see Wayland, Shenandoah County, 201-204.

6 Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 571.

7 Muhlenburg had gone to England in 1771 in order to secure the privileges of a clergyman of the Established Church. He was ordained a priest in 1772 by the Bishop of London. See George H. Genzmer in DAB s.v. "Muhlenburg, John Peter Gabriel." G. MacLaren Brydon, "The Planting of the Church in Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., X (1930), 343.

8 See George H. Genzmer in DAB s.v. "Muhlenburg, John Peter Gabriel."
Jonathan Clark (1750-1811) was the elder brother of the famous explorer George Rogers Clark. After residing in Spotsylvania County where he was deputy clerk, Clark moved to Dunmore County in 1772 where he held the same county position for three years. Along with Peter Muhlenburg, he represented Dunmore in the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.

On January 23, 1776, the convention appointed Clark captain of the Eighth Virginia Regiment under Muhlenburg. He became a major of the Eighth in January of 1778 and lieutenant colonel in May 1779. Captured with the army in Charleston, South Carolina, May 1780, Clark was paroled in the spring of 1781 and remained a prisoner on parole until the end of the war. For his service, the government awarded him 7,666 acres.

After the Revolution, Clark lived in Spotsylvania. He served as Major General of the Virginia militia forces in 1793 and in 1802 moved to Kentucky.

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1. Frederick Dorman, Descendants of General Jonathan Clark, Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1750-1811 (Louisville, 1949), 26; Clark married the daughter of Isaac Hite, brother of Abraham Hite who represented Hampshire in the May 1776 convention. John W. Wayland, Twenty-five Chapters of the Shenandoah Valley (Strasburg, Virginia, 1937), 167.

John Tipton

John Tipton (1730-1813) served as a justice in 1772 and 1773 and as a vestryman of Beckford Parish in Dunmore County. During Dunmore's War in 1774, he fought under Andrew Lewis. When the spirit of resistance developed in Virginia, Tipton was in the vanguard in Dunmore County. In June of 1774 he was instrumental in organizing the meeting at Woodstock in protest against the Boston Port Act. At the Woodstock meeting he signed the resolutions in response to British actions and became a member of the county committee of safety. He served as recruiting officer for Dunmore and represented the county with Abraham Bird at the May 1776 convention. In 1779 he was colonel of the Cunmore militia. Tipton also represented the county in the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1781 and filled the office of high sheriff of Shenandoah County in 1781.

In 1783 Tipton moved to the Wautauga settlement which was then located in North Carolina. He was elected to the North Carolina Assembly from Washington County in 1785 and served as colonel of the Washington County militia and justice of the court. After Washington County became part of Tennessee, Tipton represented the county in the terri-
torial assemblies in 1793-1795. He helped draft the Tennes­
see constitution and was a senator in the first and second
Tennessee legislatures.7

1See Margaret S. Ermarth in DAB s.v. "Tipton, John;"
McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 114, 123; Tipton
owned at least 181 acres in Dunmore in 1775 and had four
Negroes in 1783. Dunmore County Rental Book: 1774-1775
(Virginia State Library, Richmond); Wayland, Shenandoah
County, 217, 652.

2Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, Documentary
History of Dunmore's War (Madison, 1905), 422.

3Wayland, German Element of the Valley, 142; Wayland,
Shenandoah County, 198.

4See Margaret S. Ermarth in DAB s.v. "Tipton, John;"
Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.

5Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 775.

6Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 438;
McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, 1, 428; Dunmore County
became Shenandoah County in 1778. Gaines, et al., eds.,
Hornbook of History, 14.

7See Margaret S. Ermarth in DAB s.v. "Tipton, John;"
Since Abraham Bird was active in the affairs of Dunmore County from its formation in 1772, it was natural for him to sit as a representative in the May convention.\(^1\) A member of the House of Burgesses in 1774 and 1775, Bird also was a member of the Dunmore committee of safety, selected at the Woodstock meeting.\(^2\) He served as a justice in 1776 and in 1778 as a colonel in the Dunmore militia.\(^3\)

Appointed coroner of Dunmore in March 1778, Bird became the coroner of the new county of Shenandoah in May of 1778 when the county's name was changed.\(^4\) Trustee of the town of Woodstock in 1782, Bird was also a representative to the House of Delegates from 1776-1783, 1785-1788, and 1796.\(^5\) Little information is available on his personal life. He did rent at least 175 acres in 1775 and in 1783 owned three blacks.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Gaines, et al., eds., Hornbook of History, 27; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.

\(^2\) Bird became a burgess upon the death of Joseph Watson in 1774. H. R. McIlwaine and J. P. Kennedy, eds., Journals of the House of Burgesses (Richmond, 1905-1915), 1773-1776, 65; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 199; Wayland, German Element of the Valley, 142.

\(^3\) McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 228; Wayland, Shenandoah County, 584; Bird first qualified for the militia as an ensign in 1759. He became a captain in 1763.


ELIZABETH CITY COUNTY

Wilson Miles Cary replaced Worlich Westwood as Elizabeth City's delegate to the May convention. There is no information as to why Westwood did not represent the county in the May meeting. He returned to represent the county in the House of Delegates in 1777, so he could not have been totally out of favor in the county.¹

There appears to have been no great change in the type of man Elizabeth City sent to the conventions. Both men participated in revolutionary activity, although Cary appears to have been more involved. From his county offices, Westwood apparently was a member of the ruling group prior to the Revolution. Since Cary was also a man of position, Westwood was not replaced by someone from the lower class.

The county's pattern of representation prior to the Revolution was stable. Henry King sat in the House of Burgesses from 1772 until 1775 and represented Elizabeth City in all of the conventions.² Westwood's father had been a burgess, and Cary had also previously served in the assembly.³

¹Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 444.
²Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 190, 192, 195, 199.
Worlich Westwood was the son of William Westwood who was a justice, church warden, and burgess for Elizabeth City.¹ A justice of the peace in 1770 and 1776, Worlich Westwood served in the House of Burgesses in the 1772-1774 session, signing the 1774 mercantile association.² Westwood also served on the Elizabeth City committee of safety from its creation in 1774 and represented the county in the March, July, and December 1775 conventions.³ He was a captain in the militia in 1778 and the sheriff of Elizabeth City in 1791. Active in the church, he served as vestryman of Elizabeth City Parish from 1774 until 1784 and as church warden in 1776 and 1783.⁴ Westwood continued to represent his county in the House of Delegates in the sessions of 1777, 1778, 1785-1786, 1790, 1798-1799, 1799-1803 and in the convention of 1788.⁵

¹William Westwood was a justice in 1727, a church warden in 1752, and a burgess from 1736 until 1758. Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 357; Marion R. von Doehnoff, The Vestry Book of Elizabeth City Parish, 1751-1785 (unpubl. master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1957) 288.


³See biographies.
Wilson Miles Cary
Elizabeth City

Wilson Miles Cary served as a justice of the peace in Warwick, Elizabeth City, and Fluvanna Counties and as county lieutenant of Elizabeth City. He represented that county in the House of Burgesses in the assemblies of 1765-1768 and 1769-1771, signing the mercantile associations of 1769 and 1770. A vestryman of Elizabeth City Parish from 1767 until 1778 and a church warden in 1768 and 1773, Cary also served as a naval officer and receiver of Virginia duties for the Lower James River from 1760 until 1776 when he resigned reportedly to preach the revolutionary cause.

A member of the county committee of safety, Cary represented the county in the May convention of 1776. He continued to sit in the House of Delegates in the sessions of 1776, 1780-1781, 1795, and 1796. Cary also served as a visitor in 1800 at the College of William and Mary from which he graduated in 1755.
Cary was a man of considerable wealth and prominence. From his father he inherited plantations and lands in Warwick, King and Queen, and Gloucester Counties. In 1782 Cary owned 11,426 acres in six counties and the city of Richmond along with 286 slaves, 72 horses, and 284 head of cattle. His taxable worth was over £40,000. As a member of the Tidewater aristocracy, he was related to many prominent families. He married the daughter of John Blair, and his brothers-in-law were George W. Fairfax, Brian Fairfax, Edward Ambler, and Robert Carter Nicholas. Richard Cary, delegate from Warwick to the May convention, was a kinsman.

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1 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 67, 71, 78; Cary served in all ranks of the militia from lieutenant to colonel. Fairfax Harrison, The Virginia Carys (New York, 1919), 108; Stella Hardy, Colonial Families of the Southern States (Baltimore, 1958), 130.


3 Von Doenhoff, Vestry Book, 292, 297; Fairfax, Carys, 108.

4 Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), December 29, 1775; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.

5 Harrison, Carys, 108.


7 Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XI (1954), 373.

8 Harrison, Virginia Carys, 106-107.

FAIRFAX COUNTY

John West, Jr., represented Fairfax in the May convention in the seat previously held by Charles Broadwater. There is no known reason why Broadwater did not represent Fairfax in the last meeting. It is possible that he held his seat for as long as he did because of the unwillingness of other prominent men in Fairfax to run. This certainly was the case when he was first elected to the House of Burgesses in July 1774. In that election Washington hoped that either George Mason or Bryan Fairfax would replace Colonel John West who had vacated the seat. In a letter to Fairfax on July 4, 1774, Washington wrote:

I entreated several gentlemen at our church yesterday to press Colonel Mason to take a poll, as I think Major Broadwater, though a good man, might do as well in the discharge of his domestic concerns, as in the capacity of a legislator. And therefore I again express my wish that either you or Colonel Mason would offer.

It appears from a letter written by George Mason to George Washington on February 6, 1775, that there were no new elections for the March convention just as there had not been for the August meeting, giving Broadwater a place by virtue of his election to the Burgesses in July of 1774.

P.S. I beg Pardon for having almost forgot to say any thing in Answer to yr. favr. respecting the Choice of Delegates from this County to attend the
Convention at Richmond. It appears to me that the Burgesses for the County are our proper Representatives upon this Occasion; and that the best method to remove all Doubt or Objection, as well as to save Trouble, will be for the County Committee to meet & make an Entry & Declaration of this, as their Opinion.  

For the July convention, Broadwater and Washington were again the representatives of Fairfax, but it is unknown whether they were elected for this convention. When George Washington became commander-in-chief of the continental army, his place in the July convention was vacant. George Mason, feeling that his duties were at home with his motherless children, declined initially to replace Washington. He did relent and attend. Although Mason was a delegate to the December convention, he was unable to attend because of an attack of gout, leaving Broadwater to represent the county.

When the elections for the May convention were held, there seems to have been more interest in who would represent the county. As seen in the April 28, 1776, letter of Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee in which he told Lee that Mason was "with great difficulty return'd for Fairfax." The only explanation for Mason's trouble in Fairfax is a conjecture that the voters knew of his ill health and that his friends assumed that he wanted to retire. If Mason had difficulty in being re-elected, Broadwater may have been defeated. The political powers in the county may have felt that the May convention was too important for Broadwater to be a representative and saw an opportunity to replace him with a man more of their liking. Broadwater's
replacement, John West, Jr., certainly was established socially in Fairfax and well-acquainted with Broadwater. His uncle, Colonel John West, was Broadwater's son-in-law, and the family had a long history in the county. West himself had served as a surveyor and justice before sitting in the May convention. Even if West defeated Broadwater in an election, his victory would not have represented a change in the type of man who traditionally held political office in Fairfax.

1Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, III, 228.
3Rowland, George Mason, I, 198-199, 213. Mason's name is not listed on the list of delegates in Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 75.
4Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee, April 28, 1776, Lee Papers.
5Rowland, George Mason, I, 222.
Charles Broadwater Fairfax

Charles Broadwater (d. 1790) was a justice in Fairfax County before and after the Revolution, a vestryman of Fairfax Parish in 1765, and an officer in the county militia.\(^1\) When John West vacated his seat in the House of Burgesses in 1774, Broadwater was elected to replace him.\(^2\) He sat in the last session of the Burgesses and attended the first four revolutionary conventions.\(^3\) When Fairfax County passed resolutions against Britain after the Boston Port Act and appointed a county committee of safety, Broadwater became a member.\(^4\) He did not sit in the May convention and was not again a representative of the county until 1782-1783 when he sat in the House of Delegates.\(^5\)


\(^4\)Rowland, Mason, I, 427.

\(^5\)Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 351.
John West, Jr., was the son of the burgess Hugh West and the nephew of John West, burgess for Fairfax (1755-1758, 1761-1766, 1769-1774). John West, Jr., married the daughter of John Colville and settled at "West's Grove" between Mount Vernon and Alexandria.\(^1\) A friend of George Washington and George Mason, West was a county surveyor and a justice of the peace in 1764, 1767, 1768, and 1770.\(^2\) He sat in the May convention and died in 1777.\(^3\)


FAUQUIER COUNTY

Martin Pickett won the election to sit as a representative of Fauquier County in the May convention. Only one man, James Scott, had represented the county in the December meeting, and he returned as a delegate in May with Pickett. Thomas Marshall had sat as the county's other delegate with Scott in the March and July 1775 conventions, but he was unable to be present at the later meetings because of military duty.

Questions concerning the county's change in delegates arise from the letter of Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee on April 28, 1776, in which he mentioned that "in Fauquier, where were 5 candidates, Martin Pickett in room of T. Marshall." Since Pickett was considered a replacement for Marshall by Virginians, a biography of Marshall is included although he was not a delegate to the December meeting.

Biographical information on Martin Pickett is scarce. However, the pattern of Fauquier's representation would not seem to support the idea that a drastic change occurred in the type of man sent to the convention, especially when he was obviously a replacement for Thomas Marshall. James Scott had sat in the 1769 session of the Burgesses and attended all of the conventions. A pattern of stability of
representation was evident in the fact that from its creation in 1760 the county only sent four men to the House of Burgesses.  

1Brent to Lee, April 28, 1776, Lee Family Papers, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

2Stanard, ed. , Colonial Register, 180, 182, 184, 187, 189, 190, 193, 196, 199, 201, 204, 206, 209.

3Ibid. , Thomas Harrison, John Bell, James Scott, and Thomas Marshall, 152, 154, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 174, 176, 178, 180, 183, 185, 188, 190, 196, 199.
Thomas Marshall (1730-1802) began his career as a land surveyor in Prince William County. For a time he was assistant surveyor with George Washington of the Fairfax estate. In 1759 he became a justice of the peace in Fauquier County, and he went on to become a justice of the county court of chancery and county surveyor. A vestryman of Leeds Parish, Fauquier County, Marshall sat in the House of Burgesses from 1761 until 1767 when he became sheriff of Fauquier County, from 1769 until 1773 when he became clerk of Dunmore County and again in 1775. As a representative from Fauquier, he sat in the March and July 1775 conventions.

In August of 1775, Marshall became major of the First Minute Battalion. He entered actual service in October of that year and fought in the Battle of Great Bridge in Norfolk in December. While at Great Bridge, he became a major of the Third Virginia Regiment. He became a lieutenant colonel in August of 1776, and a colonel on February 21, 1777, seeing duty in the battles of Trenty and Brandywine. The state government appointed him commander of the state regiment of artillery, a position he held from January 1778 until 1781.

Although Marshall owned land and slaves in Fauquier County, his need for money caused him to move his family to Kentucky at the end of the Revolution. He served as a representative of Kentucky to the Virginia legislature and
as a surveyor of revenue for the district of Ohio. By his death, Marshall had acquired large quantities of land which were willed to his children, the eldest of whom was John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States.²

1 At that time, Dunmore County (now Shenandoah County) bordered Fauquier County.

Martin Pickett was a lieutenant in the French and Indian War and probably a major in the county militia. A member of the May 1776 convention, Pickett also represented the county in the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1781. He also sat for Fauquier in the constitutional convention of 1788. He had land in Kentucky which he bequeathed to his daughters when he died in 1804.¹

¹J. Estelle King, comp., Wills, Administrations, and Marriages, Fauquier County, Virginia, 1759-1800 (Beverly Hills, 1939), 8, 20, 42, 72; "Chilton Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XV (1905-1907), 92; "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, VII (1899-1900), 305; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.
Charles Mynn Thruston did not sit in the May convention, and James Wood represented Frederick in the seat previously held by him. There is no recorded reason for the change. Thruston probably was involved in military activity.\(^1\) It seems unlikely that he would have been defeated by James Wood. Although Wood was elected to the last session of the House of Burgesses, he did not sit in the March, July, or December convention. The county sent Isaac Zane and Thruston.\(^2\) An interesting question would be why Thruston and not Wood sat in the conventions. Perhaps Thruston was more radical than Wood. Given the military records of both men, the question of who was more radical seems unmeasurable. In any case, Wood was not a newcomer to Frederick politics. He was from a prominent family and had sat in the Burgesses, so there was no overthrow of established political power in sending him to the May convention.

\(^1\)Although Thruston was not appointed colonel of a regiment by Congress until January of 1778, it seems unlikely, given his background, that he would not have been involved in military activity prior to 1777.
Charles Mynn Thruston

Charles Mynn Thruston (1738-1812) was vestryman, and later minister of Petsworth Parish, Gloucester County, before becoming rector of Frederick Parish, Frederick County, in 1768. The year after his arrival in Frederick County, he became a justice, a position he held periodically until 1776, when he served as clerk of the county. Thruston first became involved in pre-Revolutionary activity by presiding over the meeting of freeholders in June of 1774 which passed resolutions against the Boston Port Act. He also represented the county in the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.

Thruston was known as the "Warrior Parson" or "Fighting Parson" for his military exploits. Before the Revolution, Thruston had served as a lieutenant in the French and Indian War and as an officer in the Gloucester and Frederick militias. When Congress voted sixteen extra regiments in January of 1777, Thruston was colonel of the first regiment raised. He resigned his commission in April of 1779. For his services, his heirs received at least
6,666 acres of land.  

Thruston was the trustee for two towns, Warm Springs in 1776 and Boonsborough in 1779. He represented Frederick in the House of Delegates from 1782 until 1788 and was escheator for Frederick County in 1799. As was the case with Peter Muhlenburg, Thruston had to give up the ministry after bearing arms. In 1808 he moved to New Orleans, where he died.

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1Hart, Valley of Virginia, 84; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 342.
2McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 92, 95, 114, 121; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 46, II, 457.
3Hart, Valley of Virginia, 84.
6Thruston was one officer who shared in large land grants after the war. For an account, see Freeman, Washington, III, 246-247, 333-334; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 342; Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, VIII, 226.
7Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 772; Waters and Flagg, eds., "Virginia’s Soldiers," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIX (1911), 405.
James Wood (1741-1813) was the son of Colonel James Wood, founder of Winchester and political sponsor of George Washington. 1 James Wood Jr., was a justice (1764, 1767, 1769, 1772, 1773, 1776) and a burgess (1766-1775), signing the 1769, 1770 and 1774 resolutions of the House of Burgesses. 2 In June of 1775 the Burgesses appointed him a commissioner to meet with the Ohio Indians, a position created out of the appeals from the Virginia settlers in the Pittsburgh area. 3 Before entering the army, Wood sat as a delegate from Frederick to the convention in May of 1776. 4

On November 12, 1776, Wood became a colonel in the Twelfth Virginia Regiment in the Continental Line, a regiment redesignated the Eighth in September of 1778. 5 Previous to this time, Wood had seen military action as a captain in Dunmore's War and had served as county lieutenant of Frederick, a position he resigned to accept the continental post. He served until January of 1783, retiring as a brigadier-general and receiving 7,777 acres of

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1 Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 438; Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, IX, 12.


land for his services. 6

Wood sat in the House of Delegates in 1776 and in the session of 1784-1785. 7 Governor of Virginia in 1796-1799, Wood also served on the Privy Council periodically from 1784 until 1813. In 1789 he was a presidential elector and for many years was the president of the Society of Cincinnati-Virginia. 8

1Thomas K. Cartmell, Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants (Winchester, Virginia, 1919), 289-290; Freeman, Washington, III, 313; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 843.

2McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 81, 82, 92, 95, 114, 121; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 46; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 174, 176, 181, 183, 185, 188, 190, 193, 196, 199; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 30, 46, 108, 110; Wood was also present at the May 30, 1774, meeting of the members who were still in Williamsburg and called for the August 1774 convention.


4Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.

5Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 843.

6Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, The Revolution of the Upper Ohio (Madison, 1908), 20n.44; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 843.

7Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 448.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

In Hampshire County Abraham Hite was a delegate to the May convention instead of Joseph Neaville, who had sat in the December meeting. There was no overthrow of established power in Hampshire as Neaville could not attend because he was settling claims upon appointment by the December convention in Berkeley, Frederick, Dunmore, and Hampshire counties. Abraham Hite, Neaville's replacement, was no newcomer to the political scene. The Hites were a prominent Valley family, and Abraham Hite had sat in the House of Burgesses prior to attending the May convention. No other change occurred in the county's representation to the conventions. Only one man, James Mercer, sat for Hampshire in the March and July conventions, and he continued to represent the county in the last two meetings.

1Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 127.

2Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 172, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 190, 192, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208.

82
Joseph Neaville (Neville, Nevil) Hampshire

Joseph Neaville (1730-1819) served as a justice of the peace in 1772 and sat in the House of Burgesses from 1773 until 1775, signing the Association of 1774.1 A captain in Dunmore's division during the governor's war in 1774, Dunmore later served as a recruiter.2 The 1775 convention in December to which Neaville was a delegate, appointed him a commissioner to settle claims in Berkeley, Frederick, Dunmore, and Hampshire counties arising from Dunmore's expedition. Excused on January 17, 1776, Neville left with instructions to submit his report to the next convention.3 On May 27, 1776, Neaville turned in his report to the May convention which appointed him a commissioner to dispose of the estate of Lord Dunmore in Hampshire County.4

Neaville represented Hampshire in the House of Delegates in 1777 and 1780-1781.5 He continued to serve in the militia during the Revolution and helped to determine the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. He also sat as a representative in the United States Congress in the 1793-1795 session.6

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1 Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 189 n.2; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 116; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 192, 196, 198; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, 1, 198.
Abraham Hite Hampshire

Abraham Hite (1729-1790) was a member of one of the earliest families to settle in the Valley of Virginia. He was a justice of the peace (1767, 1772) and a member of the House of Burgesses (1769-1771), signing both non-importation resolutions of 1769 and 1770. He was a captain and a colonel in the Hampshire militia during the French and Indian War.  

Hite's service after 1776 is confusing. Records show that he was elected to the House of Delegates from 1776 to 1779 and again in 1782, yet sources identify him as being active in the military during this time. Hite moved to Kentucky where members of his family were already settled and became a partner in Bowman and Hite, a large land business.
Hite was the fourth son of Joist Hite, one of the Valley's earliest settlers. Abraham Hite married Rebecca Van Meter, daughter of Isaac Van Meter upon whose grant of 40,000 acres Joist Hite and his party settled. Cartmell, Shenandoah Valley Pioneers, 259-260.


Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.

Cartmell in Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Wayland in Shenandoah County identify Hite, Sr., as being in the military. Cartmell refers to the dispute as to whether Hite, Jr., or Hite, Sr., served in the army and was imprisoned and concludes that it was Hite, Sr. An Abraham Hite was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Twelfth Regiment, redesignated the Eighth. He moved up to first lieutenant in January of 1777, captain lieutenant in May of 1778, and regimental paymaster in 1779. Taken prisoner at Charleston on May 12, 1780, Hite was a parolee until the close of the war. For his services, he received 4,611 acres of land. Gwathmey, Historical Register, 380; Cartmell, Shenandoah Valley Pioneers, 259; Wayland, Shenandoah County, 201; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 387.

Cartmell, Shenandoah Valley Pioneers, 260.
HENRICO COUNTY

Richard Randolph did not sit in the May convention as he had in the December meeting. Instead, Nathaniel Wilkinson represented the county. Since there are no Randolph papers or election returns, and few records for Henrico County, it is impossible to judge whether Randolph was defeated. However, it does seem likely the Wilkinson won his seat against Randolph at the polls. While it is probable that Wilkinson was more fervent in the patrio cause, he was not a newcomer to county politics.

The Randolphs and the Bowler-Cocke-Adams families had monopolized Henrico's representation from 1750 until 1771 when Richard Randolph was unseated by Samuel Duval in a disputed election. Duval's family was often at cross purposes with the Randolphs, but there is no proof that they were considered socially inferior to the Randolphs although the Duvals were not known to have been related to any socially prominent family in Virginia. Duval disappeared from the representation lists after the March convention, replaced by Richard Randolph.

Richard Adams had represented the county with Randolph from 1769 until 1771 when Randolph was defeated. Unlike Randolph, Adams continued to represent the county from 1771
through all of the revolutionary conventions, sitting in the August and March conventions with Duval. Both Duval and Adams were known as ardent patriots, unlike the Randolphs who were lukewarm toward the Revolution.

An interesting situation occurred after the election to the May convention which indicates that the traditional good-feeling between the Adams-Randolph families was strained, perhaps as a result of the election. On June 12, 1776, Adams laid before the convention a letter from Richard Randolph accusing Adams of committing a forgery in the book of claims to the advantage of three pounds for his brother, a clerk, in 1772. As Randolph did not bring the charges before the convention and was accusing Adams of cheating the county of three pounds in public, Adams requested that the convention investigate the charges and clear his name. The committee appointed by the convention investigated the charge and found the accusations contained in the letter "false, scandalous, and malicious," and ordered Randolph to pay the costs attending the inquiry. It is interesting to note that Randolph waited until 1776 to press his charges concerning an incident which occurred four years earlier.

Nothing in the information on Nathaniel Wilkinson sheds any light on the election for the May convention. Although his family was not as prominent as the Randolphs, his positions prior to 1776 indicate that he was a member of the ruling class. His continued representation of the
county shows his sustained popularity with the voters. Perhaps Wilkinson was a more ardent supporter than Randolph of the revolutionary cause as were Adams and Duval, and like them, was a member of the upper class.

1 Griffith, *House of Burgesses*, 140-144.


Richard Randolph

Richard Randolph was the son of Richard Randolph of "Curles Neck" and the grandson of William Randolph of "Turkey Island." Through his family he was related to many prominent families in the colony of Virginia. 1 Vestryman, sheriff, and justice, Randolph was a burgess in the assemblies of 1765 through 1771, signing the Associations of 1769 and 1770. 2 A member of the committee of safety in Henrico, Randolph represented the county in the conventions of August 1774 and July and December 1775. 3 In 1780 he offered to enlist companies of volunteer infantry for a years service wherever needed. 4 A man of
considerable wealth, Randolph owned at least 5,156 acres of land, valued at £ 4,511 with 21 slaves in Cumberland County in 1782.5

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1Griffith, House of Burgesses, 140. Among Randolph's relatives were William and Peter Randolph of the Council.


5Cumberland County Land and Personal Property Tax Books, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

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Nathaniel Wilkinson

Henrico

Before representing Henrico in the May convention, Nathaniel Wilkinson had held several important offices in the county. He had been commissioned as a justice in 1766, 1770, and 1771 and was the county sheriff in 1772. He also sat on the vestry of Henrico Parish in 1764, 1767, 1768, and 1771 and served as church warden in 1774. Wilkinson was a member of the county's committee of safety
in the years 1774 and 1775. After the May convention, he continued to represent Henrico in the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1794 and again in the 1807-1808 session.

1Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1509.
3Moore, Henrico Parish, 129, 132, 141, 151.
4Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 104.
5Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 445.
Charles Fulgham replaced Josiah Parker as one of the Isle of Wight delegates to the May convention. Parker was not present at the meeting because he was in the military.¹ None of the representatives to the conventions or the last session of Burgesses appear on the lists of representatives before these meetings. John S. Wills represented the county in all of the conventions and in the last session of the Burgesses.² If a change took place in the control of political power within the county, it occurred prior to the elections for the May 1776 convention.

¹Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 199; It is known who were the delegates to the August 1774 convention; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, III, 366, IV, 75, VI, 1509.

²Parker was appointed major in the Fifth Continental Line by the convention on February 13, 1776. Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 120.
Before being commissioned in the army, Josiah Parker (1751-1810) was a member of the Isle of Wight committee of safety and a delegate to the conventions of March, July, and December 1775. On February 13, 1776, the convention appointed him major of the Fifth Continental Line. He moved upward in rank through lieutenant colonel to colonel, serving as regimental commander under Major General Peter Muhlenburg, and fought in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, and the Brandywine. In July of 1778 he resigned his commission in a controversy and returned to Virginia, where in 1781 Governor Thomas Jefferson appointed him colonel in command of the Virginia militia south of the James River. For his services, he received 6,666 acres of land.

A member of the House of Delegates in 1778, 1779, 1782, and 1786, Parker also served as a justice during 1781-1782 and as naval officer for the port of Norfolk from 1776 until 1778. As a representative from Virginia, Parker sat in the United States Congress in the 1789-1791 session. Prior to his military and state service, Parker was engaged in mercantile activity. In 1776 a schooner belonging to Josiah Parker and Company filed a manifest to go to Curacao or any other port allowed by Congress. In addition to his mercantile interests, Parker in 1782 owned 1,200 acres of land in Isle of Wight County, valued at £4,800.
Charles Fulgham.

Isle of Wight

A member of the convention of May 1776, Charles Fulgham represented Isle of Wight in the House of Delegates in 1776-1777 and served as a captain in the Isle of Wight militia in 1777.  

KING AND QUEEN COUNTY

There was only one delegate to the December convention from King and Queen County. George Brooke also sat in the March, July, December, and May meetings. He served as a burgess from 1765 to 1768 and from 1772 to 1775. The only change which did occur in the county's representation in the May convention was the presence of William Lyne in place of his brother George Lyne who had sat in the March and July meetings. George Lyne could not attend in December or May because he was on active duty with the military.

1Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 172, 174, 176, 178, 191, 193, 196, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208.

2See biography.
George Lyne was a vestryman of Antrim Parish in 1769 and a burgess for King and Queen County in 1775. A member of the county committee of safety as early as 1774, he headed a company of Minute Men who were on duty in March of 1776. He also served as a major in the Continental Line and as a member of the Virginia Board of War. A delegate from King and Queen in the March and July conventions, Lyne was elected to the House of Delegates from 1777 until 1782.

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2 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 1036; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 102; Lyne apparently was active in a volunteer company as early as June of 1774. Mays, ed., Pendleton Letters, I, 95; "Virginia State Troops in the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXVI (1918), 60-63, XXIX (1921), 59; Lyne was active prior to the convention, for John Tayloe Corbin complained before the Committee on Privileges and Elections that Major George Lyne of the Minute Battalion "by the fullness of his power" had arrested him, and "when he came to Williamsburg to ask for a vindication that would restore his good standing, he had promptly been clapped into the guardhouse." Brant, James Madison, I, 206.

William Lyne

William Lyne was the brother of George Lyne.¹ A vestryman of Stratton Major Parish, King and Queen County, Lyne was a burgess in the sessions of 1769 and 1769-1771, signing the Non-Importation Resolution of 1770.² He was a member of the county committee of safety and represented King and Queen in the May convention.³ Reportedly, he served as a colonel after 1776 in the Continental Line. He did sit in the House of Delegates in 1776 and in the assembly of 1787-1788.⁴

In December of 1775 a William Lyne was charged before the Committee of Safety for Virginia with "endeavoring to prejudice Minute-service and exciting mutiny." After investigating the allegations, the Committee reported that while Lyne had "imprudently dropped expressions tending to injure Minute-service," they did not believe that he intended to incite mutiny and was a friend of American liberty.⁵

¹Alfred Bagby, King and Queen County, Virginia (New York, 1908), 311. The Lynes had another brother, John, who was a member of the county committee, a colonel in
the Continental Line, and a treasurer of the colony of Virginia.

Two references cite a William Lyne as being a vestryman, "Virginia Council Journals, 1726-1753," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXV (1927), 42 states that Lyne was vestryman of Stratton Major Parish. Bagby, King and Queen, 311, is of the opinion that William Lyne's father was vestryman at Stratton Major while Lyne of the convention was a vestryman of Drysdale Parish.

Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 1036, VI, 1510.

C.M.L., "The Lyne Family of Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., VIII (1928), 308-309; Bagby, King and Queen, 311; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 400.

KING WILLIAM COUNTY

Carter Braxton and Richard Squire Taylor were King William's representatives to the May convention. Braxton initially did not win a seat in the convention, but he did win election after William Aylett resigned his seat in favor of a military position. How much Braxton's conservative political beliefs had to do with his initial defeat is impossible to gauge, but his views undoubtedly had some bearing in a county which was very much in favor of independence in the spring of 1776.

Braxton was considered a political conservative during the Revolutionary period. He had made close friends in England during his visit in the 1750's, and he had ties by marriage with the Crown's representatives in Virginia. In April of 1776 he wrote Landon Carter that while he thought independence was desirable and inevitable, he did not feel that the proper time had come. Braxton felt it was improper to declare independence while the British peace commissioners were still sitting. He thought that the colonies were not united, the military was unprepared, and there was no French alliance. Should it be necessary for the colonies to call upon
France at a later time, the colonies would be at the mercy of the French in negotiations.\(^3\)

How familiar Braxton's sentiments were in King William County is unknown. In a letter to Richard Henry Lee, on April 20, 1776, William Aylett stated that the people of the county "'almost unanimously cry aloud for independence.'"\(^4\) If this is true, Braxton's ideas would not have been popular with the voters. Another possible reason for his defeat was his membership in Congress. In the letter to Richard Henry Lee of April 20, William Aylett mentioned the voters' sentiment regarding Braxton's presence in Philadelphia:

I am also urged to this from the particular circumstances in which I stand with the people of this county; they had bestowed on me every mark of their confidence and esteem having raised me to every fine appointment in their power, and were greatly discontented at my absenting myself from them in the manner I have been obliged. When I got home their clamours had got to a great height, and I was threatened with being left out of convention, but my presence at the Election instantly changed the scene, although I did not solicit a vote, there had been several candidates but they all declined except me Mr. Taylor a very worthy man who had taken uncommon pains and hated to be disappointed, it had been generally said among the people that Colo. Braxton being in Congress should not serve in convention---just so was your brother in Richmond circumstanc'd---I endeavour'd to convince them that it was more immediately their duty than ever now to elect Mr. Braxton, as it would exceedingly lessen our Representation in Congress, for a member who represented the whole Colony to lose the confidence of his particular county...[This] proposition exceedingly pleased the people who were greatly embarrassed as they had many of them not only promised Mr. Taylor but solicitted him to offer under the supposition that Colo. Braxton
could not be chosen, Taylor would not consent
to withdraw and a poll was opened, election
was tight."

Finally Aylett agreed to withdraw after the votes were
cast, urging the voters to give their votes to Braxton.
This action, according to Aylett "was received with great
shouts and acclamation, & the matter ended to the entire
satisfaction of every individual."^5

Apparently the matter did not end to the satisfaction
of the Committee of Privileges and Elections of the con­
vention, for the members reviewed the election in King
William and on May 18 declared that Aylett and Taylor
were the duly elected delegates from the county. Appar­
ently, after Aylett withdrew many voters did not cast
their ballots thinking that Braxton would be chosen.
On May 22 the committee reported that Aylett had accept­
ed the position as Deputy Commissary General to the Con­
tinental Forces in Virginia and resigned his seat in the
convention. The convention called for a new election in
King William, and Braxton and Taylor were elected on June
13.6

During the convention, Braxton was sitting in the
Continental Congress. When the convention decreased its
representation in Congress from seven to five, Braxton
and Benjamin Harrison were left off the list. Braxton's
views had not helped him with the members of the Virginia
convention. He had published a pamphlet entitled Address
to the Convention of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia on the Subject of Government in General and Recommending a Particular Form to Their Consideration.

By a Native of the Colony. The pamphlet had first been published in Philadelphia as an answer to John Adams' Thoughts on Government, and it appeared in the Virginia Gazette on June 8 and 15. The pamphlet showed Braxton's opposition to the republicanism in Adams' plan and suggested that "if the British Constitution was brought back to its original state, and its present imperfections remedied, it would not afford more happiness than any other." Richard Henry Lee wrote: "This Contemptible little Tract, betrays the little Knot or Junto from whence it proceeded." Thomas Jefferson, sitting in Congress, received at least two accounts of the change in the list of delegates. Edmund Pendleton wrote on July 22, 1776:

As to my friend Braxton they have been ever at him, and whatever his own sentiments and conduct may have been, his connections furnished a plausible Foundation for Opposition, and I was not surprised when he was left out.

William Fleming, writing to Jefferson on the 27th of July, spoke directly to the point of Braxton's political views:

Mr. Braxton's address on government made him no friends in convention; and many reports were propagated in Wmsbg. (upon what grounds I do not) respecting the extreme imprudent and inimical conduct of his lady, which, with many people, affected his political career exceedingly, of which Fitzhugh and some other of his friends informed him by letter, before we left town.
Braxton's ideas did not permanently ruin his political career, as his representation in the House of Delegates, the Council, and the Continental Congress shows. His conservatism on the question of independence at a time when independence was very much the issue was damaging. Without information on Taylor's views on independence, it is impossible to judge how much emphasis to place upon this aspect of Carter's defeat. Aylett considered Taylor a "worthy man," and Aylett, who was Richard Henry Lee's brother-in-law, appears to have supported the idea of independence.\(^{10}\) Even so, there still existed regard for Braxton in the county. Aylett thought enough of Braxton to resign his seat in the convention, so that Braxton might have a place. Although Braxton suffered two political setbacks in 1776 at the county and convention level, they were only setbacks and not the end of his political career.

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1 William Aylett (1734-1780) was a burgess from 1771 until 1775. He sat as a delegate in the July, March, and December conventions. Elected to the May convention, he resigned his seat in favor of Carter Braxton. He served as deputy commissary general of purchases for the southern department with the rank of colonel in the continental line from 1776 until his death. Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 168, n.3.

2 Hilldrip, Virginia Convention, 129.

3 Ibid., 128.

4 Ibid., 129.
In the election Braxton came in third with 39 votes while Aylett received 78 and Taylor 73. Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 166-167; William Aylett to Richard Henry Lee, April 20, 1776, Lee Family Papers, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.


Ibid., I, 471-472.

Ibid., 474-475.


Carter Braxton

King William

Carter Braxton (1736-1810) was the son of George Braxton, burgess and president of the Council, and Mary Carter, daughter of Robert "King" Carter. Educated at William and Mary and later at Cambridge, Carter married twice. His first wife was Judith Robinson, daughter of Colonel Christopher Robinson of "Herwick" in Middlesex County and his second wife was Elizabeth Corbin, daughter of Richard Corbin, the Receiver-General of Virginia.

In 1761 Braxton went to the House of Burgesses for the first time. He represented King William in that body until 1771 and again in 1775. While a burgess, he signed the Non-importation Resolutions in 1769. A justice (1764, 1766, 1771, 1773), Braxton also served
as sheriff of King William before the Revolution.

When revolutionary activity began in Virginia, Braxton became involved. Chosen to represent King William, Braxton sat in the August, March, July, and December conventions. In 1775 he mediated the gunpowder dispute between Patrick Henry and Lord Dunmore. That same year the July convention appointed him a member of the Virginia Committee of Safety, a position he held until he went to the Continental Congress. Upon the death of Peyton Randolph, the convention appointed Braxton to Congress. Arriving in Philadelphia in February of 1776, Braxton sat in Congress until August of 1776 when he was not returned with the delegation. While in Congress, he signed the Declaration of Independence.

Carter Braxton returned to Virginia and became a representative of King William County in the House of Delegates, a position he held from 1776 until 1783, again in 1785–1786, and from 1790 until 1794. At the first session of the General Assembly, Braxton was again elected to the Continental Congress where he served from 1777 until 1783 and again in 1785. A member of the Council, Braxton served from 1786 until 1791 and again in 1794 until his death in 1797. A wealthy man, Braxton was taxed in 1787–1788 for owning 8,508 acres of land in four counties and Richmond City. He also possessed 91 slaves, 15 horses, and 46 head of cattle.
Richard Squire Taylor

Sheriff of King William in 1764, Richard S. Taylor (d. ca. 1810) also served as a justice of the peace in 1766 and 1771.¹ Elected to the convention in May of 1776, Taylor sat in the House of Delegates that same year.² In 1778 he was a commissioner for the estate of two men whose property was appropriated under the Act of Assembly for Sequestering British Property.³

¹Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 168, n.4 also states that Taylor was a justice in 1764; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 71, 110.

²Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 436.

³McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, II, 117.
LANCASTER COUNTY

There is no evidence as to why Charles Carter of "Corotman," Lancaster County, did not appear at the May convention. Whether he chose not to run, or ran and was defeated, is not known. What little evidence there is seems to support the idea that he chose not to run, but the possibilities exist that he chose not to run because he could not be elected or he felt out of sympathy with the revolutionary fervor in Lancaster. In any case, Carter's replacement, James Gordon, was his social equal, and his presence at the convention does not seem to indicate an upheaval in Lancaster politics.

Carter had represented Lancaster in the House of Burgesses from 1758 until 1775 and in the March, July, and December conventions. Prior to July of 1776 he moved to "Shirley" in Charles City County, assuming great family responsibilities which were his excuse for declining a seat on the Privy Council offered him in June of 1776. He wrote to William Fitzhugh:

Shirley July the 3rd, 1776

Dear Sir:

I have a proper sense of the honour intended me by the Convention from my appointment to a seat in the Privy Council, and as much obliged to the Gentlemen for the good opinion they have been pleased to
entertain of my integrity, this mark of their esteem, I shall always think of with pleasure and ever which to deserve, but as I cannot so effectually serve my Country in the high station now allotted me, as some other members of the Community, who are ready and willing to undertake this most important duty, I must beg leave to resign all pretentions to the office, and flatter myself, that (without censure) I may be allowed to walk in the humble path of retirement long ago marked out for the remainder of my life.

I have thus early, my friend informed you of my determined resolution, that you may communicate it to the House before their adjournment. I am dear Sir

Y'r Affect. h'bles Servants
Charles Carter

Carter did retire from public life. He was only forty-four, an age when most men of his station continued to be involved with political affairs. Although the move to "Shirley" did not disqualify Carter from sitting in convention, his land holdings were considerably larger than most men's, and the upheaval and adjustment involved in moving to another plantation and taking over family affairs legitimately could have demanded most of his time.

On the other side, there is evidence that Carter was not in complete sympathy with all of the revolutionary activity. On September 20, 1775, Landon Carter wrote in his diary:

Carter of Corotman came here the night before last and yesterday I dined with him at Colo. Tayloe's. My friend, though an Associator and a delegate for the people in Convention, is so averse to this scheme of Nonexportation that he can't help calling it a damned scheme, to be at war and stop ourselves in providing money, the sinews of war....Therefore,
I tell him he is but a half faced Patriot and has only Associated, etc., etc., through some fear of the multitude. He says he submits his opinion to the Majority, though he keeps to it. I allege even to talk about it is wrong, and therefore, though as Private men his constituents have been ungrateful, Yet I can't see how a man can be cordially entrusted when a very first Principle is against what he is about.2

After this entry, Carter sat in his last convention. Perhaps he decided that his move to "Shirley" gave him an excuse for removing himself from a political scene with which he was not in complete sympathy. His age could be used to argue that he was too young to remove himself from the political scene for strictly family reasons. Perhaps the Council seat was offered to him as an appeasement for having been defeated for a convention seat or as a token signifying that he was not completely out of favor with some leaders of the Revolution in Virginia.

In regard to the 1776 convention in May, Robert Hill-drip wrote: "James Gordon and James Selden, two men of wealth through political non-entities were elected. Thus, again, in Lancaster as in Richmond, adjoining counties of the Northern Neck, planters of no political experience were elected."3 While Gordon did not have extensive political experience, Selden was not new to politics, having sat with Charles Carter in the last session of the Burgesses and in the March, July, and December conventions.4 If Selden entered the political arena because he was more enthusiastic about revolutionary activities, it is interest-
ing that Carter was not replaced in 1774.

Facts of Gordon's life do not offer information on the 1776 election to the convention. He first appeared as a justice in 1773, but he may have been too young to have appeared on the political scene before the 1770's. He was a social equal of the Carters, so his election did not represent a switch in allegiance from the traditional governing class.

1 There is no definite evidence as to when Carter moved. He was at Shirley in early July. "Charles Carter to William Fitzhugh, Shirley, July the 3rd, 1776," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XVII (1909), 257; Fitzhugh did not communicate Carter's letter to the convention because in Carter's words "he did not think proper to comply with my request." Carter wrote Edmund Pendleton requesting that Pendleton offer the letter to the House at the next meeting. "Charles Carter to Edmund Pendleton, Shirley, October 1st, 1776," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XVII, 261.

2 Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, II, 945-946.

3 Hilldrip, Virginia Convention, 135.

4 The Selden Family was first represented in the Burgesses by Richard Selden in the session of 1756-1758. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 140, 144, 146, 199; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, III, 366, IV, 75, VI, 1510.

5 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 121, 126; If Gordon was the son of James Gordon whose will was proved in 1768, James Gordon of the convention was not yet twenty-one in that year. Ida J. Lee, ed., Abstracts Lancaster County, Virginia Wills, 1653-1800 (Richmond, 1959), 100.
An active man politically in Lancaster County, Charles Carter (1732-1800) served as justice (1762, 1770-1774) and burgess (1758-1775), signing the Associations of 1769, 1770, and 1774. He was a member of the Lancaster committee of safety and one of Lancaster's representatives to the March, July and December conventions. After 1775 Carter did not hold public office. His mother and married Bowler Cocke after his father's death, and upon Cocke's death in 1776, Carter moved to "Shirley," assuming direction of the vast family enterprises. Appointed to the Privy Council by the May convention, Carter declined to serve. His land holdings were great. In 1788 he owned at least 35,118 acres of land in twelve counties, 785 slaves, 131 horses, and 815 cattle.

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1 Charles Carter was the son of John and Elizabeth Hill Carter, the heiress of "Shirley." After his marriage to his cousin Mary, the daughter of Charles Carter of "Cleve," Carter resided at "Corotoman," Lancaster County, the residence of his grandfather. His first wife died in 1770, and he married Ann Butler, daughter of Bernard Moore of King William. "Will of Charles Carter of Cleve," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXI (1923), 51n; "Charles Carter to William Fitzhugh, Shirley, July the 3rd, 1776," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XVII (1909), 257, n.5; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 204.

James Gordon\textsuperscript{1}  

James Gordon (d. 1794) was a justice (1773, 1774, 1776, 1781) and a member of the county committee of safety in 1775.\textsuperscript{2} A member of the convention of May 1776, Gordon gave the oath of allegiance to the state of Virginia and the other American states in the lower part of Lancaster.\textsuperscript{3} In 1778 he was a lieutenant colonel of the county militia and in 1782 commanded a regiment at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.\textsuperscript{4} He represented Lancaster in the House of Delegates in the years 1776, 1777, 1782, 1786-1788.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1}Vital statistics on Gordon are confusing. There existed in Lancaster a Gordon tract, embracing the town of Gordonsville, which was named for a James Gordon. A James Gordon's
will was proved in 1768 in which he left 460 acres of land to his son, James Gordon, at twenty-one. If this were the James Gordon of the convention, his age explains his entry into politics in the 1770's. Apparently, Gordon was a friend of Robert Wormeley Carter and his son Landon. Lee, ed., Abstracts, 100; Edward Mead, Historic Homes of the South-West Mountains (Philadelphia, 1899), 233. "Subscribers in Virginia to Blackstone's Commentaries of the Laws of England," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., I (1921), 184; Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, II, 1048, 1118, 1777, 1778; "Marriage Bonds in Goochland County," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., VII (1887-1899), 198.

2 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 121, 126; Stratton Nottingham, comp., Revolutionary Soldiers and Sailors from Lancaster County, Virginia (Onancock, Virginia), I, 4, 173; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, V (1895-1897), 255.

3 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Nottingham, Revolutionary Soldiers, 1.

4 Nottingham, Revolutionary Soldiers, 2, 4; Mead, Historic Homes, 233.

5 Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 379.
George Meriwether replaced Thomas Walker as a delegate to the May convention. Considering Thomas Walker's record, it is doubtful that Meriwether defeated him in an election. It appears that Walker was briefly in the military, making him ineligible to serve. A Thomas Walker who resided in Albemarle was a captain in the Ninth Continental Line, March 11, 1776. He resigned his commission in November of that year and received four thousand acres for his services. While Walker's age and the existence of a Thomas Walker, Jr., might argue that this Walker was not the elder Walker, evidence supports the idea that Dr. Walker was briefly in the military. First, the amount of land he received for a short period of service was far in excess of what other men received for longer periods of service. Only a man with connections would have received four thousand acres for nine months. While Thomas Walker Jr., was a member of a prominent family, this alone would not have enabled him to receive such extensive acreage. The scant information on his military service does not coincide with the record which might have been his father's. In May of 1780 a Thomas Walker, Jr., was commissioned a captain of the
Princess Anne militia by Governor Thomas Jefferson. In April of 1781 he became a colonel.\(^3\) While this record does not rule out prior service, it is doubtful that he was the captain in the Continental Line in 1776.

George Meriwether was undoubtedly acquainted with Thomas Walker. They both served on the county committee of safety, and Meriwether may have been at one time a relative of Walker's wife. In light of Walker's service to the Revolution, it is probable that Meriwether ran for the convention seat when Walker could not participate.

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\(^1\)Gwathmey, ed., *Historical Register*, 801.

\(^2\)Jonathan Clark received 7,666 acres of land for five years of distinguished service. Josiah Parker received 6,666 acres of at least two years of service, and Isaac Read's family received 6,666 acres for his service of three years.

\(^3\)Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, I, 5, 6, 431, 642.
Thomas Walker

Louisa

A physician by training, Dr. Thomas Walker (1715-1794) married Mildred Thornton Meriwether in 1741. Mrs. Walker was the widow of Nicholas Meriwether, a relative of George Washington. Through his marriage, Walker became the master of eleven thousand acres which became the foundation of his fortune. The Walkers had at least six children, one of whom was John Walker, burgess and representative of Albemarle in the first four conventions.

In 1749 the Council of Virginia gave the Loyal Land Company eight hundred thousand acres of land. As chief agent of the company, Walker scouted out the territory, becoming in 1751 the first white man to make a recorded expedition into Kentucky. He continued to acquire large tracts of property and built "Castle Hill," Albemarle County, in 1765. A neighbor was Peter Jefferson, and the Walkers and Jeffersons became good friends with Walker serving as an executor of Jefferson's will and as an advisor to his son, Thomas.

Walker's service to Albemarle and Louisa counties and Virginia was illustrious. A commissary of troops in the French and Indian War, he later acted as commissioner to treat with the Indians at Fort Stanwix in 1768 and at Fort Pitts in 1775. First elected to the House of Burgesses in 1752 from Louisa, Walker relinquished his seat in 1754 to serve as deputy surveyor, returning to
represent Hampshire in 1756-1761, Albemarle from 1761-1771 (signing the Association of 1769), and Louisa in June of 1775. A justice in 1761 for Albemarle, Walker was a member of the Louisa committee of safety and the Virginia Committee of Safety. He sat in the March, July, and December 1775 conventions for Louisa and was twice a member of the Executive Council (1776-1777, 1779-1780), declining reappointment in 1781. In 1779 Walker was a member of the commission which extended the border of Virginia and North Carolina westward and in 1782 he served in the House of Delegates for Albemarle.

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1See Thomas P. Abernethy in DAB s.v. "Walker, Thomas." Gwathmey, Twelve Counties, 350-351. Walker's brother-in-law was George Gilmer, Sr., who taught Walker medicine.


3The boundaries between Louisa and Albemarle were vague until 1761, and Walker practically lived on the boundary line. Gwathmey, Twelve Counties, 358.

4See Thomas P. Abernethy in DAB s.v. "Walker, Thomas."


The Meriwethers were a prominent family in Louisa County, but it is unknown if George Meriwether of the May convention was any relation.¹ There is little information on Meriwether prior to 1776. He sat on the committee of safety for the county and was a sub-sheriff in 1775-1776.² Meriwether continued to represent the county after the May convention as a member of the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1778.³ Apparently, he became interested in Kentucky lands for he was a trustee of the town of Louisville in 1780.⁴ The last public mention of him is his appointment as a commissioner in 1781 to settle titles of claims to unpatented lands in the districts of Monogolia, Yohogania, and Ohio.⁵ The only information on Meriwether's financial situation is a will recorded in 1782 which appraised his estate in 1787 as amounting to £ 262 ls. 3p.⁶

¹In 1727 Nicholas Meriwether received a grant of 13,726 acres of land and added 4,190 acres in 1730. This grant contained the site of "Castle Hill" which along with a considerable amount of the land came into possession of Thomas Walker. A Thomas Meriwether was a justice in 1742 and a major in the Albemarle militia. If George Meriwether were a member of this Meriwether family, he was a relative by marriage to Walker's wife and a member of an influential family in the area. Gwathmey, Twelve Counties, 242, 266, 322, 429; Malone, Jefferson, I, 28; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 1510.
2 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 171; Malcolm Harris, History of Louisa County, Virginia (Richmond, 1936), 442.

3 Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 407.

4 Henning, ed., Statutes at Large, X, 293.

5 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, II, 286.

LUNENBURG COUNTY

Lodowick Farmer replaced Thomas Tabb as a delegate to the May convention from Lunenburg County. Thomas Tabb may have been active in the militia at the time of the May meeting, but it is impossible to state definitely why he was not present. Scant biographical material does not indicate a great difference socially or economically in the two men. Tabb did not appear as a delegate until the July 1775 convention, but Lodowick Farmer had sat in the House of Burgesses in the 1769-1771 session, so he was not a new man on the political scene in May of 1776.
Sources confuse the biographical data of Thomas Tabb of the convention with that of Thomas Tabb, the burgess who died in 1769.\(^1\) Although there is no proof that they were father and son or relatives of any sort, the fact that sources fail to distinguish between them makes this supposition probable. The Tabbs were merchants and land agents in Amelia. Members of the firm Rumbold, Walker, and Tabb, they handled tobacco on consignment, imported slaves, and built ships. Thomas Tabb, who was a burgess from 1748 until 1758 and again from 1761 until 1769, acquired a sizeable fortune according to his will.\(^2\)

Thomas Tabb of the convention (ca. 1730-) was a vestryman for Cumberland Parish as was Thomas Tabb, burgess.\(^3\) Sheriff of Lunenburg (1769-1771), Tabb of the convention was a justice from 1772 until 1780 and a member of the July and December 1775 conventions.\(^4\) Listed as colonel in 1775, Tabb served as a recruiter in Amelia and Lunenburg in 1776 and as county lieutenant in 1778, the year in which he represented Lunenburg in the House of Delegates.\(^5\)

\(^1\)Landon Bell, *The Old Free State* (Richmond, 1927), Cumberland Parish (Richmond, 1930), and McIlwaine, ed., *Justices of the Peace* combine the two men. According to Griffith, *House of Burgesses*, 210, Thomas Tabb, burgess, died in 1769. The other sources attribute activities to him past that date with the exception of McIlwaine who gives 1766 as his death date.
Thomas Tabb, burgess, left $10,000 to his daughter and various stores to his son John who was a burgess and representative of Amelia at the conventions. Griffith, House of Burgesses, 209-211; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 138, 140, 142, 144, 146, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 171, 174, 176, 178, 180, 182; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 165, III, 365, IV, 75, VI, 1509; It is difficult to ascertain the wealth of Thomas Tabb of the convention. In 1764 a Thomas Tabb of Lunenburg owned 1,200 acres of land and in the years between 1773 and 1777 he owned a riding chair. Landon Bell, comp., Sunlight on the Southside (Philadelphia, 1931), 244, 307, 326, 347, 367.

Bell, ed., Cumberland Parish, 287.


Bell, comp., Sunlight on the Southside, 369; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 755; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 755; "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, X, (1903), 322.

Lodowick Farmer

Lodowick Farmer was a justice from 1770 until 1778, a burgess in the session of 1769-1771, and a delegate to the May convention of 1776. A member of the House of Delegates in 1776, he was in charge of executing the act for the clothing of troops raised for continental service in Lunenburg County in 1777. He served as church warden in 1780, the year in which his will was recorded. In 1775 he owned one riding chair and in 1783 his estate contained five Negroes.
1McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 104; Bell, The Old Free State, 210-211; Bell, ed., Cumberland Parish, 207; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 182, 184, 186, 188; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

2Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 373; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, II, 36.

3Bell, ed., Cumberland Parish, 31; Clayton Torrence, comp., Virginia Wills and Administrations, 1632-1800, (Richmond, 1934), 146.

4Bell, comp., Sunlight on the Southside, 355, 395.
MECKLENBURG COUNTY

In Mecklenburg County, Joseph Speed served as delegate to the May convention instead of Robert Burton who probably had moved to North Carolina before the meeting, making his replacement necessary. The county had sent the same two men, Burton and Bennett Goode, to the July, March, and December conventions.¹

Whatever change occurred in the make-up of the Southside county's representation appeared earlier in the elections for Burgesses. Mecklenburg first sent men to the House of Burgesses in 1765. Of these first two delegates, Robert Munford continued to represent the county in every assembly through 1775, but he did not sit in any of the last four conventions.² The men who sat in the convention meetings never appeared as representatives of the county before 1775, a fact which may symbolize that a change did occur in the political power of Mecklenburg County but prior to the May meeting.

¹Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, III, 366, IV, 75, VI, 1510.
²Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 169, 172, 175, 177, 179, 181, 184, 186, 188, 191, 194, 196, 199.
The most notable years of Robert Burton's (1747-1825) career were spent in the service of North Carolina. Little is known of his life in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. He owned about three hundred and fifty acres and served on the committee of safety in 1775 and as a delegate to the conventions of March, July, and December 1775. Burton probably moved to Granville County, North Carolina, early in 1776 where he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the First Continental Artillery. He later served as Quartermaster General of North Carolina with the rank of colonel. In 1785 Burton was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress, and in 1801 he was commissioned to help settle the boundary dispute between the Carolinas and Georgia.

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1 Katherine B. Elliott, comp., Revolutionary War Records, Mecklenburg County (South Hill, Virginia, 1964), 34.

Joseph Speed Mecklenburg

Joseph Speed (1750- ) was a chairman of the Mecklenburg committee of safety and a representative of the county to the convention of May 1776.¹ He sat in the House of Delegates in 1776-1777 and served as a member of the vestry in his parish church in Mecklenburg.² In 1787 he owned at least 354 acres of land in the county.

¹ Thomas Speed, Records and Memorials of the Speed Family, (Louisville, 1892), 165; Elliott, comp., Revolutionary War Records, 132, 157; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

² Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 431; Speed, Speed Family, 166.

³ Speed, Speed Family, 168.
NANSEMOND COUNTY

Willis Riddick and William Cowper were Nansemond's delegates to the May convention instead of James Murdaugh and Andrew Meade who had represented the county at the December meeting. There appears to have been no great change in the men who sat in the December and May conventions. If James Murdaugh was not on duty with the militia at the time of the May convention, he probably was during the time of the elections, and it is likely that Andrew Meade had moved out of Nansemond County during 1776.¹ The delegates to the May convention were logical replacements for Murdaugh and Meade. Willis Riddick had represented the county in the last session of the House of Burgesses and in the March convention, while William Cowper had gained notoriety by ordering a loyalist minister out of the Bennett's Creek Church.²

¹McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 30, 189; Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, VIII, 212; Wilmer L. Hall, ed., The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, 1743-1793 (Richmond, 1949), 228, 238.

²Joseph B. Dunn, The History of Nansemond County (n.p., 1907), 43. The full account is located in Cowper's biography. Since Willis Riddick sat in a convention previous to the May meeting, a biography of his life is not included.
William Cowper served as vestryman and justice in Nansemond County in 1772 and represented the county in the May convention. He gained popularity in Nansemond by ordering the Reverend Mr. Agnew at Bennetts Creek Church to leave the sanctuary. The Reverend Mr. Agnew was preaching a sermon which Cowper judged to be political. Cowper ascended the pulpit steps and requested the minister to descend. Agnew replied: "I am here doing my Master's business." Cowper answered: "Which master... [the] one in Heaven or your Master over the water? You must leave this church, or I will use force." "I will never be the cause of breeding riot in my Master's house," replied Agnew who descended the steps, never to return. 

Cowper continued to serve Nansemond by sitting in the House of Delegates in 1776, 1777 and serving as sheriff in 1778.

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1 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 119; "A Loyal Parson," Virginia Historical Register and Literary Companion, V (1852), 39-39; Dunn, Nansemond County, 43; For more information on the Reverend Mr. Agnew's troubles prior to the Revolution, see Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 226-227.

2 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, II, 178; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 363; Nothing is known about Cowper's financial status. A William Cowper owned a 250 ton ship, the Queen of France, which was built in 1787, but he may not have been the Cowper of the convention. Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, IV, 292.
A member of the July and December conventions, James Murdaugh was captain of a minute company which was on duty in Princess Anne County in February of 1776.\(^1\) Later, Murdaugh served in the House of Delegates in the session of 1778.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Force, comp., *American Archives*, 4th Ser., III, 366, IV, 75; McIlwaine, ed., *Council Journals*, II, 415; Heitman, ed., *Historical Register*, 407 states that Murdaugh was a captain in the Virginia militia from 1777 to 1780, but other references have him a captain of a Minute company in 1776. — Palmer, ed., *Calendar of State Papers*, VIII, 212; McIlwaine, ed., *Council Journals*, I, 30, 189.

\(^{2}\) Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 410; The only personal information on Murdaugh is the fact that he married Lucy Dandridge, daughter of John and Rebecca Minge Dandridge. This information might indicate that Murdaugh was not without some social standing within the county. "The Dandridge Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., VI (1897-1899), 251.
Andrew Meade Nansemond

Andrew Meade (d. ca.1795) was the brother of David Meade, burgess for Nansemond in 1769 and brother-in-law of Richard Randolph.\(^1\) It appears that the Meades were a family of economic standing for Andrew purchased four thousand acres of land from his brother in 1774. The acreage included grist and saw mills.\(^2\) A vestryman of Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Andrew Meade was a delegate to the conventions of July and December 1775.\(^3\) He moved from Nansemond prior to 1777 and later represented Brunswick County in the House of Delegates in the sessions of 1783-1784 and 1787-1788.\(^4\)


\(^2\) Meade, "Family History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st Ser., XIII (1903-1905), 38.


\(^4\) At a vestry meeting held on February 11, 1777, the vestry appointed another man to replace Meade who had moved from the county. The meeting was the first one held since December 19, 1775, when Meade was not present. The last meeting at which he was present was held on September 30, 1775. It seems likely that Meade probably moved during 1776. Library Board, *Vestry Book*, 228, 238; Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 406.
NEW KENT COUNTY

In New Kent County William Clayton replaced Burwell Bassett as the county's representative to the May convention. Although there is no explanation for Bassett's absence from the May meeting, there was no change in the leadership in New Kent County. Bassett attended the first four conventions, and he and Clayton served as burgesses together for three assemblies (1766-1768, 1769, 1769-1771). Bartholemew Dandridge, who succeeded Clayton in the Burgesses, represented the county continuously from 1772 through all of the conventions. Although Bassett probably was from a more socially prominent family, Clayton's long public service suggests that he was not a member of the lower class. Both men served on the county committee of safety, and New Kent was one of three counties whose resolutions in reaction to the Boston Port Act called for a congress of all of the colonies. Given the probable climate in the county, Bassett's continued service after 1776, and his close association with George Washington, there is no reason to assume that Clayton was a more ardent supporter of the Revolution.
Burwell Bassett

A church warden for the parish of Blisland, New Kent County, in 1759, Burwell Bassett (1734-1793) was also a justice (1766, 1770-1773) and a burgess from 1761 to 1776. He signed the three mercantile associations and seems to have served as chairman of the New Kent committee of safety. A colonel in the militia as early as 1760, Bassett also sat as a delegate from New Kent in the August, March, July, and December conventions. He represented the county in the state senate from 1777 until 1792 and in the convention of 1788.

Bassett was a member of a prominent, established family in Virginia. His predecessors had sat in the Burgesses and on the Council. He married Anna Maria Dandridge, the sister of Martha Washington. The Bassetts and Washingtons were very close friends, visiting each other frequently at "Mount Vernon" and "Eltham," the Bassett's plantation in New Kent. In addition to "Eltham" Bassett also owned Bassett Hall in Williamsburg where he entertained lavishly when the Burgesses were in session.
Bassett continued to be one of the wealthiest men in Virginia after the Revolution. In 1787 he was taxed for owning 6,124 acres of land in New Kent and Hanover counties. He owned 156 slaves, 24 horses, and 294 head of cattle.7

1C.G. Chamberlayne, ed., Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent and James City Counties, Virginia (Richmond, 1937), 680; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 60, 72, 78, 100, 105, 113, 115, 119, 125; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 161, 163, 165, 167, 170, 175, 177, 179, 181, 184, 186, 188, 191, 196, 199; Hardy, Colonial Families, 44.

2Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 30, 46, 108; Sources do not definitely state that Bassett was on the county committee; however, he corresponded with Robert Carter Nicholas during the "powder crisis," and he seems to have been chairman of the committee. Burwell Bassett to Robert Carter Nicholas, May 8, 1775, Bassett Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. I would like to thank Dr. Dale Benson of Southwestern College for bringing this information to my attention.


4Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 346.


6The Bassett's daughter married George A. Washington, a nephew of George, and John Parke Custis, Washington's stepson, died at "Eltham" in 1781 with his stepfather at his side. Fitzpatrick, ed., Washington Diaries, II, 147, n.3; Gwathmey, Twelve Counties, 55; Bassett was also related to the Cary and Harrison families. "Proceedings of Visitors of William and Mary College, 1716," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, IV (1896-
Prior to the Revolution, William Clayton (d. 1797) had been a church warden (1758, 1769) and a vestryman (1759) in St. Peter's Parish, New Kent. He was also a member of the House of Burgesses from 1766 until 1771, signing the Associations of 1769 and 1770. He also signed the Association of 1774 as a subscriber. A member of the county committee of safety, Clayton sat in the convention of May 1776 and represented the county in the first session of the House of Delegates in October of 1776. In 1777 the governor and Council ordered him into service in command of an infantry battalion. Clayton continued to be active in New Kent after the early days of the Revolution. A vestryman again in 1778, he was county lieutenant in 1782, delegate to the convention of 1788, and clerk in 1782, 1787, 1789, 1790, 1791, and 1794.

Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 175, 177, 179, 181, 184, 186, 188; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 30, 46, 109.

Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, V (1895-1897), 245; Rind's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), July 21, 1774; Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 5, 1775, and March 19, 1775; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 360.

McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 17, 476.

Chamberlayne, ed., Vestry Book, 647, 654; New Kent County, Miscellaneous Revolutionary Box 2, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, IV, 321, V, 99, 346, VI, 227; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 360.
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Michael Christian sat alone in the December convention for Northampton County which in May sent Nathaniel Littleton Savage and George Savage to Williamsburg. Information on the three delegates is too limited to draw any definite conclusion as to whether a change occurred in the type of men elected to the conventions. The three sat on the committee of safety together and none appeared on representative lists until the last two conventions. This could mean that a change took place in the political ideas of the voters prior to the December convention; however, Northampton County had a very flexible pattern of representation and the presence of new men on the delegate lists was not unusual.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 246.

\(^2\) Between the 1761 session of the House of Burgesses and the May convention, nine men represented the county. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 156, 158, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 170, 175, 177, 179, 181, 184, 186, 188, 191, 194, 196, 199, 202, 207, 209.
Michael Christian

Michael Christian was a justice of the peace in the years 1761, 1768, 1776, and a member of the Northampton committee of safety.¹ He represented the county in the December 1775 convention and in the House of Delegates from 1781 to 1782.²


²Force, comp., *American Archives*, 4th Ser., IV, 76; Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 359; There are two Michael Christians, apparently father and son. It is assumed that the Michael Christian of the convention was the elder Christian.

Nathaniel Savage

Nathaniel Littleton Savage was a justice of the peace in 1761 and 1776.¹ He signed the 1770 Association and was a member of the Northampton committee of safety.² A delegate to the convention in May of 1776, Savage also sat in the House of Delegates in 1776 and 1777.³
George Savage Northampton

George Savage was a member of the committee of safety and a representative for Northampton in the convention of May 1776. It is unknown whether he was related to Nathaniel Littleton Savage, the county's other delegate.

It appears that George Savage was not well known among certain prominent planters. In an entry for February 1786 George Washington noted in his diary: "After an early breakfast we left Mr. Scott's and about noon I reached home where I found an Eastern shore man delivering the Oats which Doctr. Stuart had engaged on my behalf of a Mr. George Savage of Northampton, viz. 800 bushels." It seems unlikely that Washington would refer to a man he knew as "a Mr. George Savage."

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1 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 59.

2 The subscribers to the 1770 Association were burges­ses and merchants. Since Savage was not a burgess, it is assumed that he signed the document as a merchant. Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 47; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 246.

3 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 425.
American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

In the May convention John Cralle sat as a delegate from Northumberland, succeeding Peter Presley Thornton who had represented the county in the previous meeting. The election in Northumberland for the May convention is one of the few county elections for which a contemporary report exists. In a letter from John A. Washington to Richard Henry Lee of April 22, 1776, Washington stated:

The choice in Richmond was most unfortunate and unhappy, in Northumberland Sucky Crawly is chosen in the room of Colo. Thornton, in Essex they have made a good choice Colo. F. Lee and Mr. Smith.¹

Although the statement "is chosen in the room of" might be interpreted to mean that Cralle defeated Thornton, evidence indicates that this was not the case.

Peter Presley Thornton probably was on duty with the military or involved in military affairs during elections to the May convention. He had a very good military record. In July of 1776 he was on duty at Barron's Point in Northumberland County.² Considering the time necessary to raise a company and move it into position, he may have been on duty much earlier. While Cralle could have defeated Thornton in an election before Thornton became colonel of the minute company, the election
returns for April 8, 1776, record 107 votes for Cralle. While the record of Thornton's votes could have been lost, it is more likely that Cralle ran uncontested in the election for the convention.

In any case, Cralle's appearance in the May convention did not signify a change in the established political power in the county. While Cralle was not as wealthy or prominent as Thornton, they undoubtedly were acquainted with each other from service on the committee of safety and from their families owning adjoining land. Furthermore, Northumberland's representation appears to have been stable. Thornton became a burgess in 1771 when he replaced Samuel Eskridge who had died. Rodhad Kenner, Northumberland's representative to the last four conventions, became a burgess in 1773 when Spencer Ball accepted the office of sheriff. The Kenners and the Cralles appear to have been familiar with each other and perhaps related as the name Kenner Cralle is found in several accounts of the Cralle family. With the exception of Thomas Jones who attended the March convention and John Cralle, Thornton and Kenner represented the county in the Burgesses and in conventions.

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1 John A. Washington to Richard Henry Lee, April 22, 1776, Lee Family Papers, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, Virginia. I am indebted to Dr. Dale Benson of Southwestern College, Memphis, Tenn. for bringing the above information and quotation to my attention.
Peter Presley Thornton (1750-ca.1781) was the son of Colonel Presley Thornton, burgess for Northumberland in the 1750's. In 1771 Peter Presley Thornton went to the House of Burgesses and continued to sit in that body through the last assembly in June of 1775. He also represented the county in the July and December conventions. Previous to 1775, he had served as a justice and as a member of the Northumberland committee of safety. Thornton had an impressive military record. Although
the sources are confusing, it is evident that he was a colonel of a regiment of Minute Men, probably as early as 1775, and was on duty with the regiment at Barron's Point, Northumberland County, in July of 1776. A lieutenant colonel in August of that same year, Thornton became an aide to Washington in August of 1777. Since he preferred line duty, he held his position with Washington for only a short period of time.

Thornton returned to Northumberland County where he served as sheriff in 1779. A man of substantial property, Thornton inherited half of his father's estate in 1770, the other portion going to his brother, Presley Thornton. After division with his brother in 1773, his slaves were worth $1,944 and the acreage totaled 1,200 acres in Northumberland. He also owned 1,800 acres in Culpeper County.

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1 Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 341; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145; Peter Presley Thornton probably was named for Presley Thornton who represented the county in the Burgesses from 1720-1761 with the exception of 1756-1768 and 1752-1755 when Presley Thornton sat for Northumberland. Peter Presley also sat on the Council in the 1760's. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 103, 105, 106, 109, 110, 112, 115, 117, 118, 120, 121, 123, 125, 147, 149, 151, 153, 156.


Thornton served as a justice in 1771. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 107, 111, 124; Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 22, 1775.

Heitman and Gwathmey apparently combine Thornton's service with his brother Presley Thornton's service as Peter Presley Thornton was dead by 1783 and their accounts of him extend through 1811. Heitman, ed., Historical Register of the Revolution, 542; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 771; With these two exceptions, there is no information on his military career past 1777. Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), August 9, 1776; Public Service Claims of Lancaster County, Court Booklet 3, April 19, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), August 16, 1776; Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), August 15, 1777; Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, IX, 22, 189; Freeman, Washington, IV, 391, n.73.

Record Book of Northumberland County, 9, (Virginia State Library, Richmond), reel 10, 495, 546.


Culpeper Land Book, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

John Craile Northumberland

Prior to serving in the convention of May 1776, John Craile had served on the committee of safety in 1775. He was captain of the militia in October of 1776 and in 1777 was appointed to tender the oaths of allegiance to every freeborn male above sixteen in the precinct commanded by him and William Graham's company.
In 1793 Cralle was sheriff.\(^3\)

The genealogy of the Cralle family is very confusing. Because of the numerous John Cralles, it is impossible to trace a definite line of descent to John Cralle of the convention. The information on the Cralle family indicates that they were small planters.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 1, 1775.

\(^2\)McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 206; "Revolutionary Proceedings in Northumberland County, 1765, 1776-1778," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XX (1911-1913), 130.

\(^3\)Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, VI, 621.

\(^4\)Lewis and Motley, comps., Wills and Administrations, II, 74, 109, 181; "Northumberland County and Some of Its Families," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XXIII (1913-1915), 190; Record Book of Northumberland County, 9, (Virginia State Library, Richmond), reel 12, 144, 147; Record Book of Northumberland County, 10, (Virginia State Library), reel 13, 93, 556; Northumberland County Land Book, 1782, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), September 20, 1776; Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), September 21, 1776; "Register of St. Stephen's Parish, Northumberland County," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XVII (1907-1909), 241.
ORANGE COUNTY

In Orange County Thomas Barbour and James Taylor were succeeded as delegates by William Moore and James Madison, Jr. There was nothing out of the ordinary in Madison and Moore's election to the May convention. Barbour, Taylor, Moore, and Madison were members of the Orange County committee of safety, and all were friends and/or relatives. Apparently, they all shared the same views toward events within the colony.

According to Irving Brant, Moore and Madison were elected to replace Taylor and Barbour who were in the military. While this explanation might account for Taylor's absence, Barbour was the sheriff and thereby unqualified to sit in the convention. In any event, there was no overthrow of the political power within the county.

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Thomas Barbour

A justice from 1768 until his death, Thomas Barbour (1735-1825) served as a burgess from 1769 until 1775, signing the 1769 and 1770 Associations, and as a member of the Orange County committee of safety. Barbour sat in the March, July, and December conventions as a representative of Orange and, as sheriff, certified the election of James Madison and William Moore to the May convention. In 1778 he became a major in the militia, replacing William Moore. He held that position until 1781 when he became a lieutenant colonel serving until 1784. As county lieutenant, Barbour was active from 1784 through 1786 and from 1789 until 1791. Barbour also represented Orange in the House of Delegates in 1787-1788 and 1791. In the sessions of 1794 and 1797-1798 he sat as a delegate for Madison County. His plantation, "Bloomingdale," in Orange County neighbored "Montpelier" on the west, and his family were close friends of the Madisons.

1 Scott, Orange County, 183; Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 148, n.2; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 85; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 181, 186, 188, 191, 194, 196, 200; Gwathmey, Twelve Counties, 283; Brant, Madison, I, 198; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 30, 46.

James Taylor (1738-1808) was James Madison's cousin. He served as deputy clerk and later clerk of Orange County between 1762 and 1798. A burgess from 1760 until 1766 and again in the last session of 1775, Taylor also served on Orange County's committee of safety and as a justice in 1776. He was a colonel in the county militia and represented Orange in the conventions of March and December 1775.
William Moore (1740-1802) was a half brother of James Madison's mother.¹ A justice, vestryman of Middle Church, Orange County, and a member of the county committee of safety, Moore also served as a major in the militia, resigning his commission in 1778.² He represented Orange in the May convention and in the House of Delegates in 1776-1779 and 1781 to 1783. He became sheriff in 1783 and held that office until 1789.³

¹Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 148, n.2.

²Moore was commissioned as a justice in 1764, 1765, 1768, and 1777. He was a vestryman at least in 1769. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 39, 60, 85, 89; Scott, Orange County, 44, 70-71; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), I, 148, n.2.

³Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 409; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Madison Papers, I, 148.
James Madison Orange

James Madison (1750-1836) was the son of James Madison, Sr., a prominent man in Orange County who served as county lieutenant, colonel of the militia, vestryman, and justice. Like his father, James Madison, Jr., involved himself in county politics. In 1774 he became a member of the county committee of safety of which his father was chairman. He sat in the May 1776 convention and in the first session of the House of Delegates, returning to sit in the sessions of 1784-1786 and 1799. In 1778 he sat as a member of the Governor's Council, and from 1780-1783 he was a delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress.

Instrumental in the meetings which led up to the Constitutional Convention, Madison sat in the convention, earning the name "the father of the United States Constitution." He was active in pressing for ratification of the Constitution at the Virginia convention of 1788. Madison continued to be active in politics, moving from Virginia affairs to the national level. A member of the United States Congress from 1780-1797, he served as Secretary of State under Thomas Jefferson from 1801 until 1809 and as President of the United States from 1809 until 1817.¹

¹Brant, Madison, I, 307; See James W. Patton in DAB s.v. "Madison, James."
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Robert Williams replaced Peter Perkins as a delegate of Pittsylvania to the May convention. Pittsylvania was a new county, sending its first representatives to the House of Burgesses in 1769. Its first burgesses were John Donelson and Hugh Innes who served until the assembly of 1775 when Peter Perkins and Benjamin Lankford were elected.\(^1\) Lankford continued to represent the county in all of the conventions except the July 1775 meeting when no representatives are listed for Pittsylvania.\(^2\)

Perkins and Williams appear to have had similar backgrounds in revolutionary activity. Both served on the committee of safety and in the militia.\(^3\) Perkins may have been on active duty with the militia when the elections for the May convention were held, as there is evidence that the militia was active prior to July of 1776.\(^4\) Perkins returned to the House of Delegates in 1777, so he obviously was not out of favor in the county. If there were any change in attitudes toward the representatives of the county, it would have to have been in the 1775 election when Innes and Donelson were replaced in the House of Burgesses, and not in the April elections

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Peter Perkins

Peter Perkins was active within Pittsylvania from its formation in 1766. Commissioned first a justice in 1767, he received commissions again in 1769 and 1774. 1 Perkins also served as a vestryman in the county. 2 When the Pittsylvania committee of safety was created in January of 1775, Perkins was a member. 3 He sat in the last session of the House of Burgesses and represented the county in the March and December 1775 conventions. 4 Later, Perkins served as a representative to the House of Delegates in 1777, and he acted as sheriff in 1778. 5

In June of 1776 Perkins was serving as a captain in the Pittsylvania militia, a duty which may have prevented

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2 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, IV, 76, VI, 1510.

his convention service. He led the militia in the Chero­
kee Expedition of November 1776 and went on to become a
major and a colonel of the militia, commanding a regiment
in the Battle of Guilford in 1781.

Little is known of Perkins' personal life. He owned
a large plantation in the southern part of the county which
he allowed to be used as a continental hospital in 1781.
In addition to operating his plantation, he appears to
have been involved in mercantile activity.

\[\text{\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
1Gaines, et al., eds., Hornbook of History, 25;
McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 81, 98, 127.

2Mrs. N.E. Clement, "Tithables of Pittsylvania County,
1767," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXIV

3Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and
Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 247.

4Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 200; Force, comp.,
American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 156, IV, 76.

5Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 416;

6McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 44; Palmer,
ed., Calendar of State Papers, VIII, 231.

7Clement, "Tithables," Virginia Magazine of History
and Biography, XXIV (1916), 188, n.26; "Virginia Militia
in the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and
Biography, XII (1904-1905), 182; McIlwaine, ed., Council
Journals, II, 29; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 617.

8Clement, "Tithables," Virginia Magazine of History
and Biography, XXIV (1916), 188, n.26.
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}\]
Robert Williams was colonel of the Pittsylvania militia and chairman of the committee of safety in 1775.¹ A lawyer, he served as commonwealth's attorney around 1776. He was state's attorney for Pittsylvania County in 1781 and represented the county in the convention of May 1776, the House of Delegates in 1776, and the convention of 1788.²

¹Mrs. N.E. Clement, "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries, Pittsylvania County Militia Officers, 1775," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIX (1911), 307; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 24; Clement, Pittsylvania County, 143; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 1182; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 247.

²Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, II, 181; Clement, Pittsylvania County, 98, 162; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 446.
PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

William Booker and William Watts replaced William Bibb and Robert Lawson as Prince Edward's delegates to the May convention. Lawson did not represent the county in the May meeting because he had been commissioned in the Continental Army by the December convention.¹ There is no known reason why Bibb was not a delegate. He was active in the militia in 1777 and returned to represent the county in the House of Delegates in 1779, so he was not permanently removed from political life.²

William Booker and William Watts were no more involved in revolutionary activity than the men they replaced. Booker was active in the militia, as was Bibb, and both administered the oath of allegiance within the county in 1777.³ Little is known of William Watts, but the fact that he was a lawyer meant that he was not on the lowest rung of the social ladder.⁴

Prince Edward County appears to have had a flexible voting pattern from its entry into the House of Burgesses in 1752. From that session until 1775, nine different men represented the county, only two of whom had the same surname.⁵ Of the men who sat in the March, July, December, and May conventions, only John Nash appeared on the repre-
sentative lists prior to 1775. If there was a shift in political power in the Southside county, it probably occurred prior to 1775 and not in April of 1776.

1 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 120.

2 Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 63; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 347.

3 Alfred J. Morrison, "Militia Officer, Prince Edward County, 1777-1781." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXI (1913), 201; Herbert C. Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, Virginia (Richmond, 1955), 41.

4 Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 51.

5 Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 131, 133, 135, 137, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 156, 158, 159, 161, 163, 165, 168, 170, 173, 175, 177, 181, 184, 186, 189, 194, 197, 200.

6 John Nash sat in the March convention with Robert Lawson. A John Nash had sat in the House of Burgesses from 1752 until 1758, but this probably was not John Nash of the convention. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 131, 139, 141, 143, 145; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, III, 367, IV, 76, VI, 1510.

William Bibb

Prince Edward

A member of the Prince Edward committee of safety, William Bibb served in the House of Burgesses in 1775 and represented the county in the July and December conventions. He was a justice of the peace in 1776 and
1785. Bibb also served as a vestryman in 1777 and as a steward of Hampden-Sydney College in 1776. References disagree as to whether Bibb served as a captain in the army or in the militia. In 1777, as a major, he was responsible for administering the oath of allegiance in the county. He represented Prince Edward in the House of Delegates from 1779 until 1781 and again in the 1784-1785 session, and served as sheriff in 1788 and 1789.

William Bibb's wife was a descendent of Governor Francis Wyatt of Virginia and a relative of Martha Washington. Reportedly a substantial property owner, Bibb owned at least 1,602 acres of land in 1782. He moved from Virginia in 1790, and his sons were prominent leaders in the territory of Alabama.

1The Prince Edward committee was organized in November of 1775. Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 247; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 200; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., Ill, 367, IV, 76.

2McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 230; Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 140, 148, 239.

3See Marie B. Owen in DAB s.v. "Bibb, William Wyatt;" Owen states that Bibb was in the army while Gwathmey, ed., in the Historical Register, 63, states that Bibb served as a captain in the militia in 1777.

4Bradshaw, Prince Edward County, 41; Alfred J. Morrison, "Militia Officers, Prince Edward County, 1777-1781," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XI (1913), 201.
Robert Lawson was practicing law in Prince Edward County in 1773.\(^1\) A vestryman for St. Patrick's Parish in 1775, he was a member of the county committee of safety and a delegate to the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.\(^2\)

Appointed to the rank of major of the Fourth Continental Line by the convention on February 13, 1776, Lawson rose in rank to become lieutenant colonel and then colonel. He resigned his rank in December of 1777 and received 10,000 acres for his services.\(^3\) His military career continued when he became Brigadier General of the Virginia militia, saving Smithfield, Virginia, in May of 1779.\(^4\) He also served on the Board of War, 1779-1780, and was county lieutenant in 1785.\(^5\)

Lawson continued to serve Virginia by sitting on the Council in 1782. He was deputy attorney general for Prince Edward County from 1784 to 1788, and its representative to the House of Delegates (1778, 1780-1783, 1787-1788) and to
the convention of 1788.\(^6\)

According to 1787-1788 tax rolls, Lawson owned land in Prince William, Fairfax, and Berkeley Counties, totaling 8,879 acres and had 54 slaves.\(^7\) From 1783 to 1805 he served as a trustee of Hampden-Sydney College. He moved from Virginia to Kentucky in 1789.\(^8\)

\(^{1}\) Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 51.


\(^{3}\) Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, 120; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, II, 447; Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, II, 1084, n.27; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 462; For more information on Lawson's military career see Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I.


\(^{5}\) Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 462; "Resignation of Robert Lawson," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXI (1923), 76, 77; Bradshaw, Prince Edward County, 227.

\(^{6}\) Bradshaw, Prince Edward County, 140, 227; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 397.

\(^{7}\) Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., 11 (1954), 377.

\(^{8}\) J.B. Henneman, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, VI (1898-1899), 177; Bradshaw, Prince Edward County, 359.
William Booker

William Booker (d. ca. 1783) served as a justice of the peace and as a member of the committee of safety for Prince Edward County.¹ He represented the county in the convention of May 1776 and was an officer in the military from 1777 until 1781.² A member of the House of Delegates in 1776, 1777, and 1778, Booker was a trustee of the Briery Presbyterian Church in Prince Edward County and a trustee for Hampden-Sydney College during 1782-1784.³

¹Booker was commissioned a justice in the years 1744, 1766, 1767, 1772, 1776. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 74, 115; Flournoy Rivers, "The Flournoy Family," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, II (1894-1895), 201; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 247.


³Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 349; Rivers, "Flournoy Family," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, II (1894-1895), 201; Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 149.

William Watts

William Watts qualified as an attorney in Charlotte in 1764 and in Prince Edward in 1765.¹ He was serving on the Prince Edward committee of safety in June of 1776 and
represented the county in the convention of May 1776. A vestryman of St. Patrick's Parish, Prince Edward County, in 1778, Watts represented the county in the House of Delegates in 1776. He moved from the county around 1787.

1"First Court of Charlotte," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, V (1923-1924), 5; Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 51.

2Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers, VIII, 199; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

3Bradshaw, Prince Edward, 239, 360; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 443.
In Prince William County, Cuthbert Bullitt sat in the convention instead of Thomas Blackburn who may have been involved with military activity which prevented him from attending. Questions concerning Bullitt's election arise from a statement in Robert Brent's letter to Richard Henry Lee of April 28, 1776, in which he mentioned that "Our friend Harry [was] much pushed in Prince William, where Cud Bullett succeeds Blackbourne." While it might appear that Brent was equating Cuthbert Bullitt's succession with Lee's close election, he may simply have been stating Bullitt's position as a new delegate. The political climate within Prince William was emotionally charged prior to May of 1776, and it seems unlikely that Blackburn would be defeated in an election by Bullitt inasmuch as the men were brothers-in-law with similar backgrounds.

Anti-British sentiment in Prince William was evident in 1774, when the county passed resolutions calling for a complete severance of trade with Great Britain. In March of 1775 the county committee of safety, of which Blackburn and Bullitt were members, resolved that any
merchant importing goods into the county had to certify that the goods had not been imported contrary to the Association of the Continental Congress. Earlier, in November of 1774, concerned men within the county had formed the Independent Company of Prince William, and Thomas Blackburn was involved with the company's activities.

In 1776 Blackburn and Bullitt were thirty-six years old, and each had held no more than two offices prior to the Revolution. While Blackburn had sat in the Burgesses, he entered as a replacement for Foushee Tebbs in 1774, and his service certainly was not similar in length to "Our friend Harry" of Brent's letter. Bullitt and Blackburn may have been ascending the political ladder at the time of the Revolution with Bullitt replacing Blackburn when the latter could not sit in the convention. The one source which states that Blackburn could not sit in convention because he was involved in the military is not documented. However, Blackburn's distinguished military career and his concern for military preparedness support this contention. In a letter addressed from Prince William County in October of 1776, Blackburn wrote Bullitt:

"I have long thought that our Militia are not upon a proper Establishment and I see cause every Day to confirm that opinion. The Militia ordinances, at present in Force, suppose that the officers appointed to command the Militia, are equal to their Duty; whereas the contrary (I speak in general within my own knowledge) is too certainly the case--"
I think therefore that the appointment of skillful adjutants to train the men, and instruct the officers in their Military Duties, would be exceeding good Improvement. It seems to me, that much must depend on the Militia of this State, in Case of Invasion (which I think we have reason to expect will be frequent) as most of the regular Troops raised here, it is probable will be call'd to the Northward....

Giben Blackburn's concern for the militia and his active involvement since 1774, it seems plausible that he might have been more interested in military affairs than in a political convention. Bullitt may have defeated him at the polls, but this change would not signify a drastic transfer of political power within Prince William County.

1 Works Progress Administration, Writers' Program, Prince William, The Story of Its People and Its Places (Richmond, 1941), 32.

2 Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee, April 28, 1776, Lee Family Papers.

3 Bullitt and Blackburn both married daughters of the Reverend Thomas Scott of "Westwood" in Prince William who was related to the family of George Mason. Both men were acquainted with George Washington and visited socially at "Mount Vernon." Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 186, II, 6; Fitzpatrick, ed., Washington Diaries, II, 64 and n. 2; 142 and n. 1, 188, 426, 449.

4 Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 30, 1775; Freeman, Washington, III, 361.


6 "Our Friend Harry" was Henry Lee (1729-1787), lawyer and planter, who sat in the House of Burgesses for Prince William from 1758-1775. He was the father of "Lighthorse Harry" Lee. Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 791, n. 1.
Thomas Blackburn (1740-1804) was commissioned a justice in 1754 and 1770. He sat in the House of Burgesses during 1774 and 1775 and served as a colonel in the militia. A member of the Prince William committee of safety, he was a representative in the March, July, and December conventions. When the county raised the first minute company in the colony in November of 1774, called the Independent Company of Prince William, Blackburn was actively involved. He was also present at the meeting in 1775 which drew up a proclamation for the county praising Patrick Henry and his followers and stating that governor's actions in stealing the powder from the magazine in Williamsburg could have warranted stronger reprisals.

In October of 1776 Blackburn expressed concern in writing to Cuthbert Bullitt and Jesse Ewell, the county's representatives in the House of Delegates, that the militia were unprepared in case of invasion and needed more
training and supplies. In December of 1776 he became lieutenant colonel of the Second Virginia Regiment, later acting as volunteer aide to General George Washington. During the Revolution, Blackburn quartered a regiment of Continental soldiers at his estate for an entire winter, feeding and clothing them without charge.

Blackburn was a member of a prominent Prince William family. His father was Colonel Richard Blackburn who sat in the Burgesses from 1745 until 1747. In 1773 the Prince William Rental Book listed Thomas Blackburn as owning 11,350 acres of land. He associated with men of wealth and social position, and one of his daughters married Judge Bushrod Washington, the heir of "Mount Vernon."

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2Although Blackburn's name does not appear on the list of Burgesses signing the Association of 1774, his name appears on the list of the twenty-five burgesses who called for the convention of August 1774. Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 110; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 200; Fitzpatrick, ed., Washington Diaries, 145, n.1.


4Blackburn went to George Washington with a committee of men from the company to request that Washington accept the position as the company's field officer and that he establish a company uniform. Washington accepted. Fitzpatrick, ed., Washington Diaries, II, 170.
Cuthbert Bullitt (Bullett)  Prince William

An attorney in 1759, Cuthbert Bullitt (ca.1740-1791) became deputy attorney of Prince William in 1761.¹ He acted as an agent for Lord Dunmore's western lands in 1774 and later served as a member of the county committee of safety and as a delegate to the May convention.² He sat in the House of Delegates in 1776 and 1777 and was attorney for the commonwealth in 1779.³ Bullitt returned to the House of Delegates as a member from 1785 until 1788, the year in which he sat in the Constitutional Convention in Richmond and became a judge of the General Court.⁴
Bullitt owned a large amount of land. By 1773 the rental book listed him as having at least 1,340 acres and in 1787-1788 the tax lists recorded him as owning 527 acres in Prince William, 989 in Fauquier, 2,200 in Botetourt, and 24,000 "in the west." He also owned 34 slaves, 21 horses, and 60 cattle.5

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1 Inman Horner, "Cuthbert Bullitt," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., II (1921-1922), 89-91; Apparently, Bullitt also qualified as an attorney in Frederick, Maryland, for he was admitted as an attorney to the Frederick County Court in August of 1760. Frederick County Judgment Record, 1758-1760, f. 948, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.


3 Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 353; Rutland, ed., Mason Papers, II, 550-552; An interesting note concerning Bullitt is the fact that in 1777 the county court ordered him to give a $1,000 bond with two securities after he published an advertisement that the militia draft was illegal and that the governor had no authority to send the militia outside of the state. Although he later retracted the statement, Bullitt did assert the right of a citizen to declare an act as being illegal, even if the act was subsequently proved to be legal. Executive Communications #1, October 6, 1777, Prince William County Court, Virginia State Library, Richmond. I would like to thank Dr. John Selby of the College of William and Mary for bringing this notation to my attention.

4 Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 353; Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, II, 6.
Bullitt inherited land from his father and from his brother Thomas who was a distinguished soldier during the French and Indian War and the Revolution. Horner, "Cuthbert Bullitt," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Ser., II (1921-1922), 89-91; W.P.A., *Prince William*, 36; Prince William County Rental Books, 1760, 1768, 1773, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Charles H. Hamlin, *They Went Thataway*, I, 346; In Robert Brown's *Virginia 1705-1786: Aristocracy or Democracy*, 46, he lists Bullitt as being a tenant but also a "gentleman." Since the land belonged to Lord Fairfax, all inhabitants on his land were, in a sense, tenants; Main, "The One Hundred," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XI (1954), 370.
PRINCESS ANNE COUNTY

John Thoroughgood served as a delegate to the May convention in the place of Christopher Wright who had sat in the March and December conventions. By 1778 Wright was residing in North Carolina, and the possibility exists that he had moved from Virginia prior to the May meeting.¹ There is no proof that he lost an election to John Thoroughgood. The information on the two men makes it difficult to assess whether one man was more radical than the other, but Thoroughgood was from a prominent Princess Anne family, so his presence did not signify a transfer of voter allegiance from the traditional governing class. If there were a basic change in the type of men who represented Princess Anne, it probably occurred prior to the May convention. Only three men represented the county between the June 1775 burgess session and the conventions. Of these men, only Wright appeared prior to 1774, and he became a burgess in 1772. William Robinson, the county's other delegate, first appeared at the March convention and Thoroughgood did not appear until the May meeting.²

¹"Princess Anne County Committee of Safety," Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, I (1895), 125.
There is no information on who represented the county in the August 1774 convention. William Robinson represented the county in the June 1775 Burgess session and in the March, July, and May conventions. He was the only delegate to the July meeting, and Christopher Wright was the only delegate to the December convention. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 200, 202, 205, 207, 209.

Christopher Wright

Christopher Wright (d. ca. 1785) was a surveyor in Princess Anne as early as 1758. In 1771 he was process-ioner for the Little Creek Precinct within the county. Captain of the militia in 1756 and sub-sheriff in 1758, Wright sat in the House of Burgesses from 1772 until 1775. Wright was also a member of the county committee of safety and a delegate from Princess Anne to the March and December 1775 conventions.

Wright was a doctor by profession and served for many years as the physician for Lynhaven Parish. Apparently, he was a prosperous man in the early 1770's, for he owned 1,666 acres, nineteen slaves, and two riding chairs. Sometime between 1775 and 1778 Wright moved to North Carolina.

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1 John H. Creecy, ed., Princess Anne County Loose Papers, 1700-1789 (Richmond, 1954), 8, 27; "Princess Anne County


Christopher Wright had a son, also Christopher Wright. Dates and activities for the two men are hard to separate. Major Christopher Wright is listed as a student at William and Mary in 1772, and he may have been the Wright on the committee of safety. "Notes Relative to Some of the Students Who Attended the College of William and Mary, 1770-1776," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., I (1921-1922), 130; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 248; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 166, IV, 76.

3John Thoroughgood (d. 1804) was a member of an established Princess Anne Family which settled in Virginia in 1621. In early 1775 the Virginia Committee of Safety selected him to choose four men to investigate and report on the loyalty of Princess Anne Citizens. A justice
in 1775, Thoroughgood attended the May convention of 1776 and represented the county in the House of Delegates in the years 1776 to 1781, 1783, 1786, and 1787. He was also a major in the militia in 1777 and served as a vestryman in Lynhaven Parish, Princess Anne County, in 1783, 1786, and 1787. Because of the number of Thoroughgoods on the tax rolls, the wealth and property of John Thoroughgood of the convention is hard to determine.

1 John Thoroughgood was a lineal descendant of Adam Thoroughgood who came to Virginia around 1621 and received a grant of 5,359 acres for inducing 105 other settlers to come to Virginia. Adam Thoroughgood was a burgess for Elizabeth City in 1629 and a member of the Council in 1637. His descendants were prominent men in the early days of Princess Anne County. Sadie S. Kellam and V. Hope Kellam, Old Houses in Princess Anne (Portsmouth, Virginia, 1931), 37; "Walke Family in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, V (1897), 88; W. G. Stanard, comp., "Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, II (1894-1895), 418.

2 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, III, 495.

3 William Maxwell, "My Mother," Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, II (1899), 133; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 438.


5 A John Thoroughgood, Sr., and a John Thoroughgood, Jr., are both listed on the tax rolls, and it is unknown which is the John of the convention. In 1775, 1776, and 1785, John, Sr., owned 1,433 acres of land, 24 slaves, and one riding chair while John, Jr., owned at least 840 acres, 13 slaves, and one riding chair. "Land and Slave Owners, Princess Anne County, 1771, 1772, 1773," Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, I (1895-1896), 108;
"Land and Slave Owners, Princess Anne County, 1775," Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, III (1900), 70; "Land and Slave Owners, Princess Anne County, 1778," Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, IV (1902), 25, 67, 75, 135, 141.
RICHMOND COUNTY

Hudson Muse and Charles McCarty defeated Robert Wormeley Carter and Francis Lightfoot Lee at the polls for seats in the May convention. There are three possible reasons for the change in representatives: the small voter turnout, the feeling for independence among the freeholders, and Lee's presence at the Continental Congress. On April 1st, 1776, Robert W. Carter wrote in his diary:

Come on the Election of Delegates to convention, where Colo. F. Lee & myself after near seven years of faithful service were most shamefully turned out by Muse & McCarty; it was a bad day, & but little more than half the Freeholders attended, those picked determined men; surprising that Colo. Lee who was judged by Convention a proper Person to go to Congress, should be rejected by Richmond County as not fit for Convention; as for myself I never ask'd but one man to vote for me since the last Election; by which means I polled 45 votes, an honorable number.1

Although Carter did not blame his defeat on the small voter turnout, some men in Virginia felt that was the reason. In a letter to Richard Henry Lee dated April 8, 1776, Pendleton wrote:

Elections are coming on; it seems Colonel Francis Lightfoot Lee and Mr. Robert Wormeley Carter, are left out, by the bulk of the freeholders being absent, not expecting a contest.2

However, Landon Carter, the defeated candidate's father,
saw more in the election than only half of the freeholders not voting. In his diary for May 1, 1776, he noted:

I have just heard A certain G.R., when asked to lend his fire lock to go against the tender, asked the People if they were such fools to go to protect the Gentlemen's houses on the river side; he thought it would be better if they were burnt down. This it seems a Gentleman heard and told to a Committee man; and though we have had a Committee since no Notice was ever taken of it. The old delegates were left out, for this very Purpose and these new ones chose for this Very Purpose for an intire independence in which no Gentlemen should have the lease share. Hurray for Independence, Sedition, and Confusion.\(^3\)

The case for Muse's and McCarty's success cannot rest entirely on Landon Carter's entry. Carter was a very opinionated individual, and he had little regard for the men who won the election. In his mind Muse was "a worthless, impudent fellow," and McCarty "a most silly though good natured fool."\(^4\) He also differed with his son on his political tactics. Although Robert W. Carter stated that he had not solicited votes, Landon Carter considered that he had "kissed the arses of the people and very servilely accommodated himself to others and yet he was shamefully turned out."\(^5\) Perhaps the elder Carter was not solely referring to the election for the May convention. Still, some of his ideas would have applied to his son's actions prior to being defeated.

In order to prove Carter's contention that Muse and McCarty were elected because of their opinions on independence, the views of Muse and McCarty on this subject
would have to be known. As they are not, it seems questionable that Francis Lightfoot Lee would have been defeated for his political views when he was a staunch supporter of the Revolution and independence. Muse had run for election before against the entrenched powers, and he may have felt that Lee's presence at the Continental Congress would prevent him from representing the county adequately at the convention. This feeling was present in other counties. In discussing the King William election in which Carter Braxton lost his bid for election, William Aylett wrote to Richard Henry Lee (April 20, 1776):

It had been generally said among people that Colo. Braxton being in Congress should not serve in convention----just so was your brother in Richmond circumstanc'd----I endeavour'd to convince them that it was more immediately their duty than ever now to elect Mr. Braxton.6

Muse and McCarty may also have resented the stranglehold the established planters had on the politics of the country.7 From their backgrounds, it does not appear that they were members of the lower class, but they did not occupy positions of influence. If they were the "determined men" that Robert W. Carter described, they probably saw to it that their supporters were present to vote. Given the small voter turnout, this support was enough to carry the election.

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1 Diary of Robert Wormeley Carter, (1776), MSS., Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia.
Francis Lightfoot Lee

Francis Lightfoot Lee (1734-1797) was a burgess from Loudoun County from 1758-1768 and justice of the peace. A member of the prominent Lee family, he became a burgess for Richmond County, serving in that capacity from 1769 until 1775. He also received a commission as a justice in Richmond County in 1770.

Like his brother Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee participated in every act of defiance against the British crown. He signed the Westmoreland Association against the Stamp Act in February of 1766. In the House of Burgesses he signed the Associations of 1770 and 1774. He was on the committee which organized the Virginia Committee of Correspondence and helped draft the Boston
Fast Day Resolution. One of the twenty-five burgesses remaining in Williamsburg after Lord Dunmore had dissolved the House of Burgesses in May of 1774, Lee affixed his signature to the call for the August 1774 convention which he attended with his fellow burgess, Robert Woremeley Carter. Elected to the March, July, and December conventions, Lee was defeated in his bid for a seat in the May meeting. During the elections to the May convention, Lee was serving as a delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress, a position he had held since 1775. He continued in that position until 1780, signing the Declaration of Independence. He returned to Virginia where he sat in the state senate.

1See Hamilton J. Eckenrode in DAB s.v. "Lee, Francis Lightfoot;" McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 57, 71, 82, 87, 100, 107; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 47, 105-107, 109, 110; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 493, II, 166, III, 367, IV, 76. Lee's alternate for the December convention was Walter Jones whose name is on the list as a delegate. There is some confusion in the sources as to the dates on Lee's service in the House of Delegates and the Senate.
Robert Wormeley Carter (1734-1797) was the eldest son of Colonel Landon Carter of "Sàbine Hall," Richmond County. Commissioned a justice in 1767 and 1770, Carter sat in the House of Burgesses from 1769 until 1775. He signed the 1770 and 1774 Associations and the call for the August 1774 convention. Representative of Richmond in the August, March, July, and December conventions, Carter was defeated in the election for the May 1776 meeting. He continued to be active in Richmond County by serving as a colonel in the county militia in 1777 and sitting in the Virginia legislature. A wealthy man, Carter owned at least 10,533 acres of land in six counties and the city of Williamsburg in 1780.

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1 Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 130, n.7; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 82, 100; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 46, 103, 110.

2 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 493, II, 166, III, 367, IV, 76; Diary of Robert Wormeley Carter, MSS., CW.

3 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 441; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 357.

4 Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 130, n.7; Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly, XI (1954), 372.
Charles McCarty (d. 1788) was a justice of the peace in 1770 and a vestryman for Farnham Parish, Richmond County. In the year 1776 he represented the county in the May convention and in the first session of the House of Delegates. In October of that year, the Council appointed him sheriff of Richmond County.

Little information is available on McCarty. Reportedly the McCartys and Lees were related by marriage and visited upon an equal social footing. They also exchanged social and business letters. Aside from McCarty's attendance at the convention, the only known revolutionary activity in which he participated was the prosecution of a Scottish merchant who violated the Association.

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1 Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I, 288; McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 100; Hilldrip, Virginia Convention, 134.

2 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 400; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 205.

3 Hilldrip, Virginia Convention, 134. Hilldrip does not give any details as to how much land McCarty owned or the frequency of written and social exchanges between the Lees and McCartys. He cites the Lee Papers and Lee Transcripts for evidence. There is one notation in the Record Book of Northumberland County, 10 (Virginia State Library, Richmond), 1776-1780, 405-406 which registers McCarty and Hudson Muse as witnesses to the sale of land from Peter Presley Thornton to Richard Lee.
An unsuccessful candidate for the House of Burgesses in 1771, Hudson Muse (d. 1799) succeeded in being elected a delegate to the May convention. A vestryman of Farnham Parish, Richmond County, Muse sat in the House of Delegates in 1776 and served as the collector of the port of Tappahannock from 1777 until at least 1790.

Muse was familiar with the Lee family, at least on a business level. In the correspondence of Richard Henry Lee in the early 1770's, Muse is mentioned several times as shipping tobacco with the Lee family.

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1 Griffith, House of Burgesses, 81; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

2 Hilldrip, Virginia Convention, 134; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 410; Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 416n.

3 Ballagh, ed., Letters of Lee, I, 87, 88-89, 96, 123; Muse was the brother of Daniel Muse, a merchant in Richmond County. Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 416n.
George Stubblefield did not represent Spotsylvania in the May convention because he was in the army.\(^1\) His replacement, George Thornton, came from an established family in Spotsylvania, and Mann Page, Jr., the county's other delegate, sat in all of the revolutionary conventions.\(^2\) The change in the Spotsylvania delegation did not reflect a change in political attitude within the county.

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\(^1\) Heitman, ed., *Historical Register of the Revolution*, 526.

\(^2\) Since Stubblefield and Mann Page, Jr., were the burgesses in the 1774 session, it is assumed that they sat in the August 1774 convention. Stanard, ed., *Colonial Register*, 197, 203, 205, 207, 209.
A cadet during the French and Indian War, George Stubblefield qualified as captain of the county militia in 1769. A justice in 1773 and a burgess from 1772 until 1775, he sat as a delegate to the conventions of August, March, July, and December of 1775. Prior to his service in the regular army, Stubblefield served on the county committee of safety and commanded a volunteer company which was on duty in July of 1775.

In February of 1776, Stubblefield became captain in the Fifth Virginia Regiment. Promoted to major in the Fourteenth Virginia in April of 1777, he resigned his post on February 22, 1778. He continued to serve Virginia in a military capacity as a colonel in the Virginia militia during 1780 and 1781. He also represented the county in the House of Delegates from 1770 to 1781 and 1785 to 1786 and served as high sheriff in 1786.

Stubblefield was a member of an old Spotsylvania family, and his land and slave holdings were extensive. Apparently, he associated with families such as the Randolphs and Carys, for he witnessed land transactions between them.

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1 Crozier, ed., *Spotsylvania County*, 519, 520.
In July of 1775, volunteer companies assembled in Williamsburg. At that assembly, Stubblefield signed a letter to the Receiver-General, John Blair, requesting that Blair give a full account of the King's monies in his possession. The men also appointed Stubblefield the officer to demand the King's monies in the possession of Colonel Lewis Burwell with the instructions that if Burwell refused to deliver up the money, Stubblefield was to bring Burwell before the officers at the camp. Brock, ed., Gilmer Papers, 94, 99.

Heitman, ed., Historical Register of the Revolution, 526; Information on Stubblefield's service from March 3, 1776, until July 10, 1776, may be found in Orderly Book of the Company of Captain George Stubblefield, 1776 (Virginia Historical Society, Collections, New Ser. [Richmond, 1887]), VI, 141-191. Brock, ed., Stubblefield's Orderly Book, 141-191.


George Thornton Spotsylvania

A justice for King George in 1770, George Thornton (d. 1781) was a member of the committee of safety and
represented the county in the May 1776 convention and in the 1776 and 1777 sessions of the House of Delegates. Thornton was a captain in the Spotsylvania militia as early as 1777 and a major in 1780. Although some sources state that he was a major in the Continental Line, it is more probable that he was a major in the militia. It is known that he was at the bombardment of Marlboro by Dunmore in August of 1776 and headed a company of Spotsylvania men on duty in Williamsburg. Thornton's family was intermarried with the Washingtons, and his father, Francis Thornton, sat in the Burgesses from 1723 until 1726 and from 1742 to 1747.

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1 Apparently, there were two George Thorntons living in the King George-Spotsylvania area. A Captain George Thornton lived in Fredericksburg and operated a substantial mercantile business and owned property. Sources may confuse the two men, but it appears that George Thornton, the son of Francis Thornton, was the delegate to the May convention. Crozier, ed., Spotsylvania Records, 309, 315, 323, 344, 345, 346, 348, 381; W. G. Stanard, "The Thornton Family," William and Mary Quarterly, IV (1895-1897), 159 and V (1895-1897), 59.

2 McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 101; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 249; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 437.


Thornton's sister-in-law was Jane Washington, daughter of Augustine and niece of George Washington, and his grandmother was George Washington's aunt. After Thornton's death his wife married General Thomas Posey, a member of Washington's staff during the Revolution and the father of John Posey, husband of Martha Washington's daughter, Lucy Frances. W. G. Stanard, "The Thornton Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 59; "Alexander Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., X (1901-1903), 182; Rowland, Mason, I, 112.
In Stafford County William Brent replaced Charles Carter of "Ludlow," Stafford County, as a delegate to the May convention. Although there is no known explanation for Carter's absence from the May meeting, his absence did not signify a permanent removal from a position of power with the county. He returned to represent Stafford in the House of Delegates in 1776 along with Brent, and continued to represent the county for several years.¹

Questions about the possibility of Brent defeating Carter arise from the letter of Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee in which he stated that "Will Brent was for Stafford in room of Charles Carter."² Brent may have been reporting Carter's replacement at the convention which he did not choose to attend, and Brent, probably a relative of William Brent's, would relay the information of Brent's election. Since Carter did not remain long at the December convention, and was involved with the manufacture of saltpetre, perhaps he felt that his talents were demanded elsewhere.³

Brent's record of revolutionary activity is much stronger than Carter's, and the voters may have felt that the times demanded a more outspoken supporter of revolu-
tion. Even if this were the case, the two men were both prominent individuals in the Northern Neck county, so the change was not a victory for the lower class.

1Swem and Williams, eds., *Assembly Register*, 356.

2Robert Brent to Richard Henry Lee, April 28, 1776, Lee Family Papers.


Charles Carter

Stafford

As befit a man of his social position, Charles Carter (1733-1796) served as a justice and as a burgess for King George and Stafford County, signing the Associations of 1769 and 1774.1 Apparently, he also served as a colonel in the militia as Edmund Pendleton referred to him as "Colonel Carter" in his correspondence.2 A member of the committee of safety, Carter represented Stafford County in the conventions of March, July, and December 1775.3 At the December convention, the treasurer of the colony advanced Carter £100 upon instruction from the convention for the manufacture of saltpetre in which Carter was engaged. Granted leave by the convention on December 9, Carter was absent for the remainder of
Carter continued to serve the county after the May convention. He sat in the House of Delegates from 1776 until 1779 and again during 1782 and 1783. In 1789 he represented the county in the Virginia Senate.

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1Charles Carter was the son of Charles Carter of "Cleve" (1707-1764) who was a burgess for King George County from 1742 until 1764. Educated in England, Carter married Elizabeth Chiswell, daughter of Colonel John Chiswell and resided first at "Nanzatico," King George County, and later at "Ludlow" in Stafford County. He was the brother-in-law of Charles Carter of "Corotoman" and later "Shirley" and the nephew of Landon Carter. Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, I, 130, n.6, 463n; Harrison Fairfax, ed., "The Will of Charles Carter of Cleve," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXI (1923), 43, 57; "Notes and Queries...A George Washington Letter and Its Recipient. The Tomb of John Dandridge," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXIII (1925), 200-201; Hardy, Colonial Families, 118; Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 115, 123, 126, 140, 47, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165; Carter served as justice for King George in 1762 and 1770 and Stafford in 1772. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 56, 101, 110; Carter was a burgess for King George in the sessions of 1756-1773. He switched to Stafford in 1773, serving until 1775. Stanard, ed., Colonial Register, 140, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 172, 180, 182, 191, 194, 197, 200; Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 1, 108.


4Ibid., IV, 79.

5Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 356.
William Brent (1710-1786) was a justice of the peace who along with other Stafford justices in 1765 resigned rather than execute the Stamp Act. In a letter to Governor Fauquier, the men stated that they felt the act to be inconsistent with the motto of their county: "We will deny or delay no man justice." ¹ Apparently, the resignation was not lasting for Brent served as a justice again from 1766 until 1769 and in 1772 and 1773. ² He was active in both Stafford and Prince William Counties. A member of the Stafford County committee of safety, Brent signed the Prince William proclamation of 1775 denouncing Lord Dunmore's removal of the powder from Williamsburg. ³ Later, he represented Stafford at the May convention of 1776. ⁴

In 1776 Brent also served as a captain in the Prince William militia. ⁵ It was in this same year that the British under Lord Dunmore burned his plantation in retaliation for Brent's revolutionary activity. ⁶ He continued to involve himself in military affairs by serving as Lieutenant Colonel of the First Virginia State Regiment in 1777 and Colonel of the Second Virginia Regiment from 1778 to 1781. For his services he received 6,666 acres of land. ⁷

Brent's other activities included service as tobacco inspector in 1777, 1778, 1784, and 1785. He also repre-
sented Stafford in the Senate in the session of 1780-1781.8 A planter of substantial means and social standing, Brent inherited 7,500 acres of land from the original 30,000 acre Brent Town Tract.9 On the 1787-1788 tax lists, he was listed as owning 6,887 acres of land in Stafford, Prince William, and Fauquier Counties with 81 slaves, 39 horses, and 67 cattle.10

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8Rowland, Mason, I, 124-125; Hardy, Colonial Families, 88; Greene, ed., Landon Carter Diary, II, 1064n.
10Brent may have also sat on the Prince William committee of safety in December of 1774. W.P.A., Prince William, 31; Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), June 2, 1775; Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., I, 617.
11Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.
12W.P.A., Prince William, 33; Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 91.
14Gwathmey, ed., Historical Register, 91.
15McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 206, II, 232; Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 351.
16W.P.A., Prince William, 154; Brent was born in England. His brother-in-law was Archbishop Carroll, the first Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese in the United States. The Brents were also intermarried with the Mason family of "Gunston Hall" in Fairfax County. Hardy, Colonial Families, 88; Rowland, Mason, I, 349-350.
17Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., 11 (1954), 370.
In Warwick County, Richard Cary served as a delegate to the May meeting instead of William Langhorne who had sat in the previous session. Langhorne had moved from the county by early 1777, and he could have been out of the county or contemplating a move prior to the May convention. There is no evidence that Cary defeated him in an election. Both men were active in revolutionary activity although Cary's record is more illustrious.

Political power in Warwick County resided with the established Tidewater families, and the pattern of representation was stable. Both the Langhorne and Cary families were prominent and were distantly related. William Langhorne and Richard Cary had held the political offices befitting men of their social position, and neither was a newcomer to county politics, so Cary's election did not signify a triumph over the traditional leaders.

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1 McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 322.

2 The county only sent three men to the conventions. William Harwood, the other delegate to the December and May convention, had sat in the Burgesses from 1742 until
William Langhorne

Prior to the Revolution, Langhorne had served as justice, sheriff, church warden, and major in the militia.\(^1\) As a burgess (1772-1775), he signed the Association of 1774.\(^2\) Active in revolutionary affairs, Langhorne was one of the twenty-five burgesses present at the May 30, 1774, meeting which responded to the notification of the Boston Port Act by calling for the revolutionary convention of August 1774.\(^3\) In November of that year he became a member of Warwick's committee of safety and in September of 1775 he represented the Warwick committee in the district meeting charged with raising a company of regular troops for service in Williamsburg.\(^4\) In that same month, he served as commissioner to settle accounts of the militia called into service in the lower sections of the country.\(^5\) As a delegate for Warwick, he attended the March, July, and December conventions.\(^6\) Langhorne moved from Warwick prior to early 1777.\(^7\) His financial status is unknown, but he was a member of an established

\(^{3}\)Langhorne's mother-in-law was a Cary. Hardy, Colonial Families, 316.
Warwick family with at least three generations represented in the House of Burgesses. 8

1 Langhome served as a justice in 1766, 1767, 1770, and 1773. McIlwaine, ed., Justices of the Peace, 77, 83, 103, 123; He was sheriff in 1768 and 1770, church warden of Warwick Parish in 1772. Purdie's and Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), February 15, 1770; Rind's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), December 17, 1772; Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 9, 1775.


4 Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 9, 1775; Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), September 16, 1775; Coleman, ed., "Committees of Safety," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., V (1895-1897), 250.

5 Parks' Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), September 1, 1775; Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), October 28, 1775.


7 Although a William Langhome represented the county in the House of Delegates in 1795 and 1796, Langhome of the convention had moved from Warwick by February 3, 1777. Swem and Williams, eds., Assembly Register, 397; McIlwaine, ed., Council Journals, I, 322.

8 The first Langhome was Captain John Langhome who settled in Warwick in or before 1675 and represented the county in the House of Burgesses in 1676-1677. In 1675 Langhome purchased 1,350 acres of land and obtained a grant in 1681 for 1,970 acres. William, father of William of the convention, sat in the House of Burgesses from Warwick in 1748-1749. William of the convention was a planter and resided at "Gambell." He married Elizabeth Scarsbrooke, daughter of Colonel Henry and Martha (Cary) Scarsbrooke. "Notes to Virginia Council Journals," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXII, 132, n.5.
Richard Cary (1730-1789) was a member of the prominent Cary family which included his kinsman, Wilson Miles Cary, delegate to the May convention from Elizabeth City. Educated at William and Mary, Cary studied law and became Deputy King's Attorney for Warwick in 1760. He also served as justice and high sheriff of Warwick in 1761 and succeeded his father as clerk of the county in 1764. From 1766 until 1776 Cary was the clerk of the legislative committees for religion and trade.¹

Cary signed the Association of 1774 as a subscriber and in November of 1774 became a member of the Warwick committee of safety.² Along with William Langhorne and two other gentlemen from Warwick, Cary represented the county at the district committee meeting where the representatives organized a battalion of regulars. At that meeting Richard Cary was chosen a captain of the battalion.³ While the December convention was sitting, Cary petitioned the convention for more military assistance against the British to bolster the Warwick militia of which he was a captain.⁴ Cary sat as a delegate for Warwick in the next convention which met in May of 1776.⁵

Cary became a judge of the Admiralty Court in 1776, a position which made him a member of the first Supreme Court of Virginia. He held the position until 1788, the year in which he was a delegate to the constitutional
convention. He became a member of the General Court in 1788 and resigned the next year.  

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1 Wilson Miles Cary and Richard Cary were distant cousins. They were both descendants of the immigrant Miles Cary (1623-1667) who had four sons. Richard Cary descended from Thomas Cary (1647-1708) who established in Warwick County the Carys of "Windmill Point" and "Peartree Hall" while Wilson Miles Cary descended from Miles Cary (1655-1709) who founded the Cary branch of "Richneck," "Creeleys," (Warwick County), "Carysbrook" and "Oakhill" in Fluvanna County. Harrison, Virginia Carys, no page number. "Will of Wilson Cary," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, X (1902-1903), 189-193; Harrison, Virginia Carys, 54; Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, V, 165.

2 Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 109; Harrison, Virginia Carys, 54; Purdie's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), March 9, 1775.

3 Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), September 16, 1775; "Williamsburg---The Old Colonial Capital," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XVI (1907-1909), 51.

4 "Warwick County Committee to the Convention," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIV (1906-1907), 385.

5 Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, 1510.

6 Harrison, Virginia Carys, 54; Mays, ed., Pendleton Letters, II, 426, 554.
CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF MEMBERSHIP CHANGE IN THE MAY CONVENTION

Thirty-nine men of the one hundred and thirty delegates present at the May meeting of the Virginia Convention had never sat in a previous convention. They represented thirty-three counties in which at least one delegate was new. Twenty counties and the borough of Jamestown made no changes in their delegations since the last meeting in December. In the remaining eight counties, the boroughs of Norfolk and Williamsburg, and the College of William and Mary, changes in delegations occurred, but these changes did not represent the replacement of former delegates by new men. Four of these counties had sent representatives to the convention who had sat as delegates in the March or July 1775 meetings; in four cases, substitutes were present (including the second delegate in one of the counties just mentioned), and four constituencies which were not represented at all in the December convention sent delegates in May.

While the thirty-nine new delegates represented not quite a third of the total membership, their pre-
sence at the convention would have represented a signifi-
cant turnover in membership and an important sign of a
radical upheaval in Virginia if the new men defeated
former delegates in elections for the May convention.
However, this did not occur to any significant degree.

The following statements can be made with regard to
the new membership of the May convention.

1) Almost one half of the new delegates, nineteen in all, were probably elected because their predecessors were in the military and did not participate in the elections held in April. This is definitely the case in thirteen instances and most likely the situation in six others. 4

2) Three new men replaced delegates who do not appear to have stood for re-election. One was a sheriff who certified the election of his replacement; two others, on commission from the December convention, were away from their counties in April.

3) Three new delegates appear to have replaced men who had moved from their counties by the time of the elections and/or the convention.

4) In the case of eleven new delegates, there is insufficient evidence to draw definite conclusions. The probability is that at least three did not defeat incumbents, while one probably did, the replacement for Richard Randolph in Henrico County.
5) There are only three certain defeats of incumbents. Electors in Richmond County picked Hudson Muse and Charles McCarty over Robert W. Carter and Francis L. Lee, while in King William, Nathaniel Wilkinson defeated Carter Braxton. Braxton, however, eventually sat as a delegate in the convention.

The following table, identifying the new men and their predecessors by county, summarizes the reasons for the changes.
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<th>Military</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Defeated</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<td>Charles Mynn Thruston</td>
<td>xP²</td>
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<td>James Wood</td>
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¹: Incumbent defeated
²: Replaced by new men
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<td>TOTALS:</td>
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¹Joseph Cabell was on commission from the December convention.

²XP indicates probable military service.

³Fauquier sent only one delegate in December, James Scott, who attended all the meetings. Thomas Marshall who had sat in the March and July conventions was not present in December because of military service, and Pickett was considered his replacement.

⁴Joseph Neaville was on commission from the December 1775 convention.

⁵King and Queen only sent one delegate, George Brooke, to the December convention, and he sat in the May meeting with William Lyne. Since William Lyne was obviously replacing George Lyne, the county's other delegate to the first two conventions, both men are included in the study.
Robert Burton had moved to North Carolina.

Andrew Meade may have moved from Nansemond County.

Willis Riddick, who replaced James Murdaugh, had served in the March 1775 convention.

Thomas Barbour was sheriff at the time of the April election.

William Langhorne may have moved from Warwick.

The total number of new men is greater than the total number of "Reasons for Change" because of the situation in Buckingham, Nansemond, and Northampton counties.
A study of the new delegates to the May convention does not support the thesis that the meeting mirrored a radical change in the voting patterns or political ideas of Virginians. While there were thirty-nine new members, one hundred twenty-one men were present who were not novices on the political scene. Moreover, leadership at the convention did not change from previous meetings. Edmund Pendleton presided over the convention as he had since July 1775. His repeated election as president reflects Virginia's basic adherence to traditional patterns of leadership. Pendleton was conservative and opposed independence until the last, but it was he who introduced the resolution calling for the break with Great Britain. Virginia's leaders moved with the times and maintained positions of influence and power. Their accommodation is further exemplified by the fact that the majority of delegates were in favor of independence when they reached Williamsburg in May. The elections to the convention had been a referendum on the question of independence, and most Virginia leaders supported independence by April, insuring their presence at the most important meeting in their colony's history.

As ideological leadership did not change, neither did the social or economic complexion of the convention. For the most part, gentlemen replaced gentlemen. Certainly there were delegates from newer counties who did not
equal the Tidewater aristocracy in polish or position, but they were prominent in their own areas. Although there were cases where delegates to the December convention were replaced by men of lesser wealth and position, there was no pattern of a take-over by men of a lower class.

These thirty-nine new members, similar in status and background to the veteran delegates they joined at the May convention, proceeded to vote for independence and frame a new republican government. The constitution which they wrote stipulated that the new government was to be introduced by the convention electing a governor, the Privy Council, and such other officers as the delegates felt necessary. The first Assembly would convene after elections for the Senate in October of 1776. The convention delegates accordingly elected Patrick Henry as the first governor of Virginia and selected the members of the Council. Their work accomplished, the delegates adjourned. They entered Williamsburg as subjects of the Crown. They left in July as free men.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1Lists used in compiling information on convention representation are found in Force, comp., American Archives, 4th Ser., II, 165-166 (March 1775); III, 365-367 (July 1775); IV, 75-76 (December 1775); VI, 1509-1510 (May 1776).

2Richmond, Prince Edward, Orange, and Dunmore had replacements for both seats in convention. Northampton and Buckingham each sent one delegate to the December convention but had two new men in May. Frederick and Princess Anne Counties each sent one delegate to the December convention and two different men to the May meeting. However, in both cases, one of the May delegates had sat in a previous convention, giving each county only one new delegate in May. Nansemond County had changes in both delegate positions, but Willis Riddick, a delegate in May, had attended the March 1775 convention, giving Nansemond only one new man.

3Hanover and Albemarle Counties each had a change in their delegation. Patrick Henry replaced Samuel Meredith in Hanover, but Meredith represented the county in the December convention because Henry was involved in the military and could not attend. Since Henry was present at all the conventions except the one in December, he should not be considered a new delegate. See W.E. Dodd in DAB s.v. "Henry, Patrick."

Charles Lewis of Albemarle County was attending his second convention in May. He had sat as a substitute in the July meeting and now returned to fill the place left by John Walker whose commission from the December convention rendered him unavailable for convention duty in May. Boyd, Jefferson Papers, I, 386.

Bedford and Gloucester Counties each had one delegate at the December meeting and by now returning previous delegates to the May convention, attained full representation. With the exception of the December meeting, their delegations remained unchanged in number and personnel through the four conventions.

Substitutes were present for Charles City, York, Albemarle (which also had an elected change), and Williamsburg. Accomac, Fincastle, Norfolk Borough, and the College did not send delegates to the December meeting but had representatives in the May meeting. Accomac could not send

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delegates in December because of Dunmore's activities in the Chesapeake. Eckenrode, Revolution in Virginia, 127.

4. King and Queen and Fauquier Counties are included in the military count although the places in the December convention were vacant. The new men in May replaced men who had sat in the July and March conventions and were unavailable for convention duty in December because of the military.

5. The complete text of the constitution may be found in Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, I, 377-383; Wood, American Republic contains the best discussion of the constitution and work of the May convention.
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VITA


In June of 1966 the author entered the Apprenticeship Program in the field of Interpretation of Historical Sites sponsored by Colonial Williamsburg and the Institute of Early American History and Culture. In September of 1966 the author began graduate work in history at the College of William and Mary.