TWO HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

From Academy to College

Hampden-Sydney in the Revolution

John Coombs

From Academy to College:

The Founding of Hampden-Sydney and the Revolution in Virginia

John C. Coombs

VOLUME IV
in a series of booklets published on the occasion of the
250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF
HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE
in 1775-1776

250th Anniversary Volumes

To celebrate its two and a half centuries of service
to Commonwealth and Nation, the College commissioned
this set of six studies on various aspects of its institutional history.
The Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE),
a program of the Council of Independent Colleges
supported by the Lilly Endowment and member dues,
generously funded this project.

ON THE COVER

Diploma of Nash LeGrand, 1786
(The oldest surviving Hampden-Sydney diploma)

The marbled paper was produced by
Will Thomas '25
in the class "English 360: Authorship and the History of the Book,"
taught by Dr. Evan Davis.

From Academy to College

Hampden-Sydney in the Revolution

LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

The hand-engrossed copy of the Charter of Hampden-Sydney College, signed by the speakers of the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate, the actual document which made it a legal entity in 1783.

IN MID-OCTOBER 1774, THE MINISTERS AND ELDERS of Hanover Presbytery convened at the Cub Creek settlement in Charlotte County, Virginia, for their regular twice-yearly meeting. The mixture of business that filled the agenda included answering the sundry "Calls and Supplications" from churches with "vacant" pulpits seeking clergy to attend their respective congregations, as well as the examination of Caleb Wallace, a graduate of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) and an apprentice preacher from New Castle Presbytery in Pennsylvania, who after successfully passing the "pieces of Tryal preveous to his Ordination" was "solemnly set apart to the sacred Work of the Ministry" as pastor to the churches of Cub Creek and Little Falling River (Hat Creek). [1]

With Wallace and his elder (*i.e.,* lay representative) Robert Caldwell added to their number, the attendees resumed their ongoing deliberations regarding the "Expediency of erecting a Seminary of Learning some where within the Bounds of this Presbytery" that they had first begun four years before, and after confirming their choice of Augusta County in the Shenandoah Valley as the preferred location for such a school they proceeded to make arrangements for soliciting contributions from the "several Congregations subject to our Jurisdiction" to effect its establishment.

They then turned to discussing the need to "remonstrate against" a piece of legislation that had been long pending in the General Assembly entitled "A Bill for extending the Benefit of the Act of Toleration to his Majesty's Subjects dissenting from the Church of England in the colony of Virginia," and decided to undertake composing a petition proffering amendments at a special meeting scheduled to take place the following month at Union Hill, the Amherst County home of Colonel William Cabell, Jr.

Before adjourning, however, and apparently prompted to consideration of the possibility by "the Company of Mr. Samuel Smith"—another New Castle apprentice preacher and former classmate of Wallace's who had ventured south to work as a missionary the previous year—the presbyters concluded that "owing to the great Extent of this colony" an educational institution would be "of great Importance on the south side of the blue ledge [*sic*]" as well. They therefore decided to also "set a Subscription on foot to purchase a Liberary and Philosophical Apparatus and such other things as may be Necessary for that purpose," pledging that if the fundraising drive met with success and "Mr. Smith, or any Gentleman properly qualified may be enduced to take the Superintendency," they would "gladly concur to establish and Patronize a publick Seminary in Prince Edward or in the upper end of Cumberland" County. [2]

As this summary of the proceedings at Cub Creek indicates, the founding of Hampden–Sydney was not the culmination of long-term planning but rather the result of an impromptu decision that hinged on Samuel Stanhope Smith's expressed willingness to "take the charge of such a Seminary" if the requisite funds were raised. Had he not been in attendance, the presbyters almost certainly would have limited their efforts to supporting the school they had already decided to "fix" in Augusta, and thus any attempt to establish another somewhere east of the mountains would in all likelihood have been delayed for many years, perhaps even more than a decade, since by the time of their next regular meeting in April 1775 the imperial crisis between Britain and its North American colonies had devolved into violent conflict with the shedding of blood at Lexington and Concord.

Yet it so happened that Smith was present, of course, and within four months subscriptions totaling £1,300 had been collected and Smith was appointed "Rector" and "Superintendent" along with

eight "Trustees" who were empowered to henceforth "conduct all the Concerns" of the undertaking on the Presbytery's behalf. Consequently, what was initially called the "Prince Edward Academy" would come into existence just as Virginia was beginning its revolutionary transformation from royal colony to republican commonwealth, and the political and social upheavals that accompanied the struggle for independence would leave a lasting imprint on the young institution in the form of its name, mission, and legal standing as a chartered college. [3]

Smith's chance attendance at the Presbytery's October 1774 *"Sederunt"* was not the only historical contingency that immediately figured in the academy's founding. The Cub Creek meeting took place within mere days of the Virginia militia's defeat of Shawnee and Mingo warriors at the Battle of Kanawha (Point Pleasant) in the Ohio Country, after which Governor John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore, compelled the Shawnee leader Cornstalk to accept a treaty that yielded all land south of the Ohio River to the colony. News of the victory temporarily dampened the hostility that had prevailed since Dunmore's dissolution of the House of Burgesses the previous spring, with Frederick County militia officer Angus McDonald reporting after he returned home from Williamsburg in January 1775 "that all the Country is well pleased with the Governor's Expedition." Even the embittered Norfolk merchant and future loyalist James Parker allowed that the earl was for a brief few months "as popular as a Scotsman can be amongst weak prejudiced people." [4]

It was during this very same period of relative rapprochement that the congregations of Cumberland and Prince Edward launched their initial fund-raising drive to support the then still prospective academy, and the reduced tensions perhaps played some role in enabling them to succeed "beyond Expectation" with garnering subscriptions of funds. The language used in the remonstrance that the Hanover presbyters penned during their special session held at Cabell's Amherst plantation

Governor John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore, by Joshua Reynolds, 1765

in November 1774 certainly suggests that they at least still believed the controversies roiling the empire would end in reconciliation rather than rebellion. In the course of offering "a few remarks upon the bill," their petition "humbly" requested that it be worded in such a way "as will be most likely to obtain the royal assent," and that the "dissenting clergy" be afforded the same "freedom in speaking and writing upon religious subjects, which is allowed by law to every member of the British Empire in civil affairs." [5]

But if the presbyters and lay contributors to the new academy apparently continued to expect that Virginia would remain a British dominion, Dunmore was under no illusions that the spate of goodwill he enjoyed following his triumphant return from the Kanawha had done anything to reverse the collapse of royal government that his dismissal of the legislature had set in motion. Indeed, the only reason that the Hanover Presbytery was able to compose a petition in response to the toleration bill, which had been introduced and considered two years earlier, was that the legislature had not sat for a full session since that time. [6]

Dunmore had repeatedly prevented the Assembly from convening after the imperial crisis became more aggressively confrontational with Rhode Islanders' burning of the revenue cutter *Gaspee* in June 1772 and the Boston Tea Party in December 1773. However, the necessity of securing an appropriation to fund his expedition against the Ohio Indians and the renewal of several expiring laws relating to regulation of the militia and the courts induced him to allow the May 1774 meeting to take place, although he likely did so with some trepidation, knowing that news of the British government's punitive response to the destruction of the East India Company's tea could arrive at any moment. That eventuality came to pass just three weeks into the

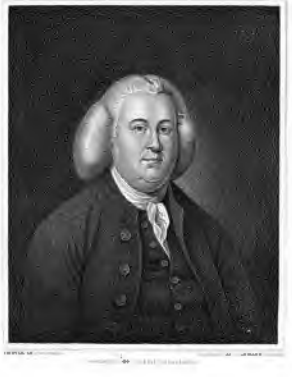
session, when word reached Williamsburg that Parliament had passed legislation forcibly closing the port of Boston—the first of five statutes collectively referred to as the *Coercive* or *Intolerable Acts*—eliciting a reaction that Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland County likened to a "shock of Electricity." [7]

The House of Burgesses promptly proceeded to adopt a resolution denouncing the action taken against "our Sister Colony" and designating "the first Day of *June* next," when the closure was to take effect, "as a day of Fasting Humiliation, and Prayer, devoutly to implore divine interposition, for averting the heavy Calamity which threatens destruction to our Civil Rights, and the evils of civil War." The burgesses had moved boldly in part out of confidence that the governor would not retaliate "until the Country business was finished," and Lee had even prepared additional resolves critical of British policy to be considered later in the session. Yet just two days later, after he had obtained a printed copy of the fast day resolution, Dunmore dissolved the House. [8]

Although his gubernatorial predecessors had responded in similar fashion to inflammatory resolves passed by the House of Burgesses at earlier points in the imperial crisis, the aftermath of Dunmore's decision would play out in a profoundly different way. [9] Immediately following their dismissal, a large majority of the now former burgesses removed to the nearby Raleigh Tavern, where they composed, signed, and ordered published an "Association" that advocated for both a general boycott of imports from the East India Company and the appointment of "deputies from the several colonies of British America, to meet in general congress" for deliberation on those "measures which the united interests of America may from time to time require." Most of the signers subsequently headed home. But twenty-five were still in the capital when a circular letter arrived from the Boston Committee of

Correspondence that advocated for a cessation to all trade with Britain, and being unwilling to take any action on the proposal without input from their departed colleagues, the remaining rump agreed to publish a call for a "general Meeting" of former members of the House to begin "on the first Day of August next." This date was selected to afford them with sufficient "Opportunity of collecting the Sense of their respective Counties" on the question of expanding the "late Association" to a "Scheme of Nonimportation to a very large Extent." [10]

Styled as a "Convention" on account of its extralegal character, the August meeting began with the assembled delegates selecting Peyton Randolph, the Speaker of the House of Burgesses, to preside as president, before turning to the various issues they had been appointed to consider. Their initial item of business was the election of seven men to represent Virginia at the "General Congress" of the colonies that was by then slated to convene at Philadelphia on September 1, 1774, and after two rounds of voting that task was duly accomplished with the selection of Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison V, and Edmund Pendleton.



Peyton Randolph
BY CHARLES WILLSON PEALE, 1784

They then took up the more controversial matter of expanding the import restrictions adopted at the Raleigh Tavern meeting in May. After an extended discussion lasting several days, they "unanimously, and with one Voice" adopted a revised "Association" that extended the embargo against East India Company goods to all British and British West Indian imports (including shipments of enslaved Africans)

beginning November 1, 1774, while also providing for an eventual ban on all exports to the mother country and the Caribbean colonies after August 10, 1775, if "American Grievances" remained unredressed. Moreover, to secure broad compliance with this escalating program of commercial resistance, the delegates also authorized the creation of local committees to monitor trading activity and ensure that the sundry prohibitions were "properly observed." Any merchant or trader who refused to sign the Association was to be boycotted; goods imported in breach of its sanctions were to be either re-shipped out of the colony or confiscated; and the names of all violators were to be published "in the Gazettes, and in the County where he or she resides" so that their neighbors could more readily identify "such Person or Persons as inimical to this Country, and break off every Connection and all Dealings with them." [11]

The effectiveness of the Association was significantly strengthened by the halting of civil process in Virginia's judicial system, a breakdown that ironically was afforded political cover by Dunmore's decision to dissolve the House of Burgesses. Among the pressing "Country business" left unfinished when the May session prematurely ended was renewal of the "fee bill"—a statute first passed in 1746 and repeatedly extended at nearly every subsequent session of the Assembly down to 1772—that specified the sums that clerks, sheriffs, and other officials were entitled to collect for performing their respective duties. Because the existing law setting this schedule of fees had expired in April 1774, civil litigation in the "Courts of Justice consequently stopt," as Richard Henry Lee put it, depriving creditors of the ordinary mechanisms for enforcing contracts and collecting debts. In the legal vacuum that resulted, merchants who complied with the Association accordingly incurred little immediate financial risk, while defiance became more perilous as the newly established committees stepped in to regulate

commercial behavior through surveillance, public denunciation, and the coordinated ostracization of recalcitrants. By unintentionally disabling the colony's judicial machinery, Dunmore's dissolution of the Burgesses shifted practical authority into the hands of the extralegal institutions the Convention created, rendering its system of sanctions far more effective than would have otherwise been the case. [12]

Richard Henry Lee
BY CHARLES WILLSON PEALE, 1784.

The agreement crafted by the August Convention provided the essential template for the "Continental Association" adopted by the Philadelphia Congress the following October, which notably stipulated in its eleventh article that "a Committee be chosen in every County, City, and Town, by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the Legislature." This language was a subtle but clearly deliberate alteration of the Virginia body's instruction that the committees "be chosen in each County, by such Persons as accede to this Association," and made explicit the expectation that members would be elected. That was certainly how the amended provision was interpreted, as the results of county elections held in accordance with the Continental Association were subsequently published in the various versions of the *Virginia Gazette*. [13]

The colony's developing revolutionary regime was thus imbued from the outset with a popular and participatory character that marked a crucial departure from the nature of governance under crown rule. The principal institution of local government, the county courts, had been controlled by self-perpetuating oligarchies of gentry who exercised power by virtue of royal commissions appointing them as justices of

the peace. By contrast, the Association committees, while in most cases composed of the same wealthy men, derived their authority from the expressed consent of their enfranchised neighbors and were expected to act transparently on the community's behalf.

The directive that county committees be elected was neither a cynical gesture of false populism nor the product of elite benevolence. Rather, it reflected hard political reality. The boycott's effectiveness not only depended upon convincing (or coercing) the mass of inhabitants to refrain from purchasing British goods but also the ability to place every shop, warehouse, landing, and country store under close scrutiny, an ongoing task that required substantial manpower to perform. An enforcement system that relied solely on elite oversight would have been incapable of carrying out such comprehensive surveillance, particularly in a predominantly rural colony like Virginia, where settlement was dispersed and points of commercial exchange virtually limitless. To be successful, the Association needed the broad, willing, and above all active cooperation of the population, and vesting authority in elected committees was the only viable means of securing it. Empowering ordinary Virginians to monitor compliance, report violations, and participate directly in the administration of sanctions, even to point of selecting leaders, fostered a sense of communal vigilance and shared responsibility, while on a more practical level it also harnessed local knowledge and social networks to more readily expose "the enemies of American liberty." For a resistance movement that claimed to be defending the fundamental rights "of his Majesty's Subjects in North America," the use of elected committees to coordinate and oversee the embargo therefore provided essential political legitimacy, the maintenance of which would prove ever more crucial as the imperial crisis transitioned into a war for independence.[14]

To preserve that credibility, though, the membership of the county

committees also needed to be representative, since winning the trust of those segments of the colony's population who had been politically marginalized or even persecuted was vital if they were to be enlisted in the struggle against Britain. After all, as late as 1772 the men who attended the August Convention to devise a means of protesting against "the Grievances and Distresses by which his Majesty's American Subjects are oppressed" had, as members of the House of Burgesses, twice approved a bill that would have imposed strict limits on the times and places that "Protestant Dissenters" could hold services and forbid the "Doors of their Meeting Houses" to be "locked, barred, or bolted" when they did gather for worship, a requirement that the Hanover presbyters understandably claimed would "fix a stigma upon us" as deserving of suspicion if it became law.[15] Yet when acting as an extralegal "Convention" those very same men had rhetorically included the very same dissenters among "the good People of this Colony," and by so doing implicitly requested their cooperation with the measures articulated in the Virginia Association. The surest means of gaining their support, then, was to allow some of their leaders to serve on the county committees placed in charge of enforcement, particularly in the western and southwestern parts of the colony where Scotch-Irish and Germans comprised a significant proportion of inhabitants and in some cases constituted a majority. Consequently, dissenters such as John Dawson of Amherst, Robert Smith of Cumberland, and the Reverend Richard Cummings of Fincastle obtained seats on their respective county committees, and the Augusta committee included numerous nonconformists. Many of the Presbyterians associated with Hampden Sydney's founding would also serve. Samuel Stanhope Smith joined the Prince Edward County committee in 1775 along with trustees Captain Nathaniel Venable, the Reverend Richard Stankey, and Captain John Morton, while the Reverend John Todd

served on the Louisa County committee. In addition, Anglican trustees Colonel John Nash and Colonel Thomas Reade respectively chaired the Prince Edward and Charlotte County committees, and Reade's fellow Charlotte burgess Colonel Paul Carrington would be appointed to the Virginia Committee of Safety when that body was created in 1775. Thus from the very beginning the new academy had strong connections to Virginia's evolving patriot movement.[16]

Those connections were important, since, acting under the imprimatur of the Continental Congress as well as of the Virginia Convention, by the end of 1774 the county committees had almost completely eclipsed Crown authority in the colony. During Dunmore's absence in the Ohio country, a cache of dispatches from William Legge, second earl of Dartmouth and secretary of state for the colonies, had piled up on his desk. Among them was a circular notice to all governors of a royal proclamation issued in October that prohibited the export of all "Arms or Ammunition" from Britain except by license and directing them to "take the most effectual measures for arresting, detaining, and securing" any such articles "which may be attempted to be imported" into the province under their care, as well as another letter addressed to Dunmore alone urging that "every power of Government" be "made use of to prevent unlawful Assemblies of the People for factious purposes."[17]

Despite being away from the capital Dunmore had managed to send Dartmouth copies of the Raleigh Tavern Association and the call for a "general Meeting" of former burgesses that had been published in May. But the demands of prosecuting his campaign against the Indians had prevented him from relating any information about the proceedings of the Convention that followed, and when he finally had time to catch up on his correspondence the beleaguered governor had nothing but bad news to report. "As to the Power of Government, which your

Lordship, in your Letter No. 11 directs should be exerted to counteract the dangerous measures pursuing here," he grimly wrote in a fifty-page missive dated Christmas Eve, "I can assure your Lordship that it is entirely disregarded, if not wholly overturned." The embargo against British imports was being enforced "throughout this Country with the greatest rigour," he continued. "A Committee has been chosen in every County, whose business it is to carry the Association of the Congress into execution," and "Every County, besides, is now arming a Company of Men, whom they call an independent Company, for the avowed purpose of protecting their Committees, and to be employed against Government, if occasion require." After sardonically noting that the chief method of inducing compliance with the boycott was to allow "the vengeance of an outrageous and lawless Mob to be exercised upon the unhappy victims," he lamented that he could think of "no instance where the interposition of Government, in the feeble state to which it is reduced, could serve any other purpose than to suffer the disgrace of a disappointment, and thereby afford matter of great exultation to its Enemies, and increase their influence over the minds of the People."[18]

Dartmouth was appalled and shaken when he received the letter in mid-February. "The Steps which have been pursued in the different Counties of Virginia" were "of so extraordinary a Nature," he wrote Dunmore in response, "that I am at a loss for words to express the criminality of them & my surprise that the people should be so infatuated, as tamely to submit to Acts of such Tyranny & Oppression." He further related that he had read those parts of Dunmore's letter addressing the state of the colony's government on the floor of Parliament, and the information conveyed perhaps influenced the debate in the House of Commons that culminated with the approval of a "conciliatory" resolution that the Prime Minister, Frederick North, second earl of Guilford, had introduced

on February 20, 1775. In his opening remarks, North explicitly stated that its propositions "form an express declaration, and do not begin a negociation" regarding the issues of parliamentary supremacy or its power to tax the colonies, nor was he willing to recognize the Continental Congress as a legitimate body. His offer was both narrow and limited: if the legislature of any of the "Provinces or Colonies in America" would commit to raising funds that "his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament" deemed sufficient to pay a proportionate share of the costs of imperial defense and support the colony's civil government—with both sets of funds to be raised in whatever manner the colony deemed appropriate but placed at Parliament's disposal—then Parliament would refrain from imposing further taxes on that colony. The only exception would be duties necessary for the regulation of trade, with the net revenue from those duties credited back to the colony's account. Although the resolution passed seven days later with a large majority, nearly a quarter of the members present voted against it, with Edmund Burke, widely accounted as a "friend" of the colonies, offering particularly caustic criticism during the debate. He had ventured that day to the House, he maintained, determined to support "anything which might lead in any way towards conciliation"—only to find that, far from being the "change of measures" it was rumored to be, North's proposal was "altogether insidious in its nature," and instead of "being at all fitted to produce peace, it was calculated to increase the disorders and confusions in America."[19]

As North's circumscribed offer made its way across the Atlantic, developments in Virginia began to assume a decidedly more belligerent bent. When they had adjourned in October 1774 after adopting the Continental Association, the delegates to the Philadelphia Congress had agreed to reconvene in the spring of 1775 if the dispute with Britain remained unresolved. Consequently, using the authority

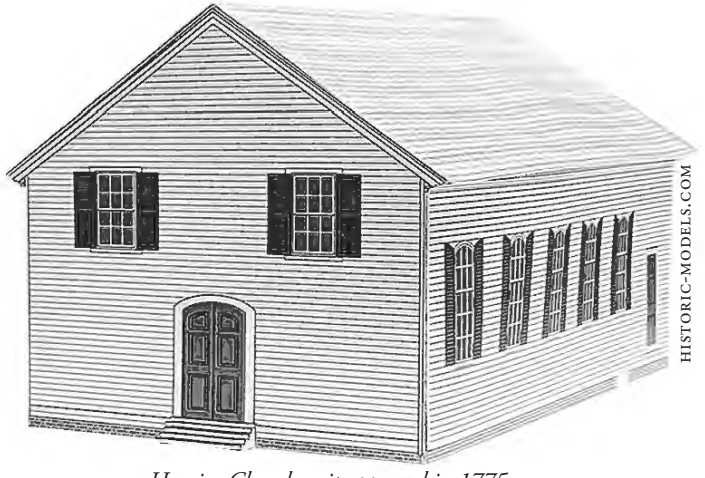
granted him as president by the August 1774 Convention, in January 1775 Peyton Randolph issued a call for the election of delegates to attend a second Virginia Convention that—owing to Dunmore's presence in the capital—was to be held in the town of Richmond beginning on March 20. Although the immediate purpose of the Second Virginia Convention was to once again elect representatives to the Continental Congress, in the preceding months a steady flow of disturbing news reached America regarding the increasingly hostile attitude of the British public toward the colonies and the measures being set in motion by North's ministry to compel their obedience.[20]

In one polemical booklet, the former army officer Sir William Draper declared that he had "not the least scruple to affirm that the Bostonians are even now guilty of High Treason" and advised that one potential means of countering colonial intransigence was to "Proclame Freedom to their Negroes" who could then be employed in forcing their former masters to *"render unto Caesar the Things which are Caesar's."* The noted writer Samuel Johnson referenced Draper's suggestion when he observed that "It has been proposed, that the slaves should be set free, an act, which, surely, the lovers of liberty cannot but commend," and also mentioned a "wild proposal" to "give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them, now and then, to plunder a plantation." In addition, news of the October 1774 royal proclamation prohibiting the export of arms and ammunition was published in the *Virginia Gazette* along with a report that "amazing Quantities of Fire Arms, &c. being nearly ready to send to America" had been "stopped at Gravesend."[21]

Commentary and news of this sort acquired an even more ominous aspect when considered in light of the alarming information contained in personal letters such as Richard Henry Lee received early in the new year from his brother Arthur, a London lawyer who had formerly

served as the official agent of Massachusetts alongside Benjamin Franklin. "Sir Willm Draper has publishd a proposal for emancipating your Negroes by royal Proclamation & arming them against you" that "met with approbation from ministerial People," he warned, while also noting that he had heard the "present intention of the Ministry is to declare all Meetings & associations in America illegal & treasonable—to guard the Coast ag[ain]st all traffic & communication with Holland France & Spain—"to corrupt New York—and to employ a military force, chiefly from Canada, if necessary." To impart a proper sense of urgency, Lee pleaded with his brother to "for gods sake begin your Preparations in time—talk little & do much. Let not necessity come upon you like an armd man, & find you defenceless."[22]

With four thousand British soldiers under General Thomas Gage already occupying Boston and the menacing prospect of additional army and naval forces on their way to join them, a profound sense of foreboding and heightened tension hung over the colony when the Second Virginia Convention commenced at Henrico Church (now St. John's in Richmond) in late March. After again electing Randolph as president and spending several days considering the proceedings of Congress and a memorial submitted to the king by the Assembly of Jamaica, Patrick Henry rose on March 23 to offer a resolution demanding that the "Colony be immediately put into a posture of Defence" and calling for the development of a "Plan for embodying, arming and disciplining such a Number of Men as may be sufficient to that purpose." He was strongly opposed by a powerful contingent of moderate delegates such as Robert Carter Nicholas, Benjamin Harrison V, and Edmund Pendleton, who argued that moving forward with such drastic measures was still "premature." It was in answering their objections that Henry delivered the now famous speech that purportedly closed with him first posing the rhetorical question



Henrico Church as it appeared in 1775.
It survives as the transept of the current St. John's church in Richmond.

"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" before providing the resounding answer of "Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" as he raised an ivory letter opener and plunged it toward his breast in a dramatic gesture intended to evoke the Roman patriot Cato.[23]

Although Fauquier County delegate Thomas Marshall would later describe the speech as "one of the boldest, vehement, and animated pieces of eloquence that had ever been delivered," Henry was not the last man to take the floor. Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Nelson, Jr., of Yorktown also delivered forceful addresses in favor of the resolution's adoption, and it was perhaps the speech given by the wealthy and well-connected Nelson—a member of the Virginia Council of State—that was most decisive in gaining its approval in a close vote. Having made the momentous decision to mobilize the

colony for potential war, the Convention reelected the same seven men to serve as Virginia's delegation to the Continental Congress and then adjourned.[24]

In one of the more compelling moments of his speech, as recounted by those who were present, Henry darkly declared that "The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms," and, if he did indeed deliver the line or something

RED HILL, PATRICK HENRY NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Peter F. Rothermel's famous portrayal of Patrick Henry at the climax of his speech places it in a much grander and more romantic setting than the real one.

to that effect, it proved a prescient warning.[25] On April 19, just three weeks after the Convention adjourned, a contingent of 700 British troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith and Major John Pitcairn skirmished with Minutemen at Lexington and Concord before being forced back to Boston in a fighting retreat that lasted throughout the day and ended with the city encircled by Massachusetts militia.

Only two days later and a full week before word of the engagement reached Virginia, Dunmore directed marines from the H.M.S. *Magdalen* to seize the powder stored in the Williamsburg magazine. Despite all appearances, the close concurrence of the two events was merely coincidental. Whereas Gage had received a letter on April 16 explicitly ordering him to take action, Dunmore moved on his own initiative and in response to the measures adopted by the recent Convention. "The Resolution of raising a Body of armed men in all the Counties," he later wrote Dartmouth, "made me think it prudent to remove some Gunpowder which was in a magazine in this place, where it lay exposed to any attempt that might be made to seize it," adding that he "had reason to believe that the People intended to take that step." While Dunmore had intended the seizure "to have been done privately [*i.e.,* covertly]," the marines were spotted after they had loaded just fifteen half-barrels and "Drums were then sent thro[ugh] the City" calling its independent company to arms. The governor's "Palace" was quickly invested, and likely would have been assaulted had not Peyton Randolph, Robert Carter Nicholas, and mayor John Dixon succeeded in persuading the gathered throng to let them present a demand that "the Powder be delivered up immediately." Although Dunmore considered their prepared statement to be "one of the highest insults that could be offered to the Authority of His Majesty's Government," he also recognized the potential explosiveness of the situation, and

thus maintained that recent reports of slave uprisings had led him to remove the powder "lest the Negroes might have seized upon it," while also promising that he would immediately "deliver it to the People" if circumstances required. As conveyed by Randolph and Nicholson, the explanation was sufficient to satisfy and disperse the crowd, and the immediate crisis passed.[26]

Yet as reports of the magazine incident spread across the colony, militia companies from Henrico to Hampshire and Loudon to Lunenburg were mustered in response. By the time news of the fighting at Lexington and Concord reached Fredericksburg, more than 600 "light horse" had gathered there, with additional companies marshalled at Bowling Green in neighboring Caroline County and others headed their way from as far away as Berkeley, Dunmore, and Frederick counties in the Shenandoah Valley. The ire of the assembled men toward the governor had no doubt been raised to fever pitch by arriving accounts of an incensed Dunmore having subsequently avowed in public that "if any Injury or insult was offered to himself" or one of the British naval officers involved with the seizure "he would declare Freedom to the Slaves, and reduce the City of Williamsburg to Ashes." Nonetheless, after a letter arrived from Randolph imploring them to "proceed no further" since all was quiet in the capital—a request reinforced by the personal pleas of Edmund Pendleton and Richard Henry Lee—an *ad hoc* council composed of 102 officers and men voted to comply and "return to their respective homes," directing that urgent notification of their decision be sent to the companies *en route* from the Valley "and such other counties as are now on their march." Not all of the companies so apprised agreed to disband, however, most notably those mustered in Hanover County under Patrick Henry, who advanced to within fifteen miles

Booklet Five deals in detail with the history of African Americans at Hampden-Sydney.

of Williamsburg. Only after Carter Braxton of King William County hurriedly arranged a £330 payment for the powder did Henry agree to stand down his men, pledging to use the money to buy more powder and to account for it at the next meeting of the Convention.[27]

When a still seething Dunmore issued a printed declaration denouncing "a certain Patrick Henry, of the County of Hanover, and a Number of his deluded Followers" for their "outrageous and rebellious practices," county committees throughout Virginia voted to defend them. Volunteer detachments of militia drawn from King William, Caroline, and Henry's home county escorted him on his journey to Philadelphia as far as the Potomac River, where they saluted him and showered him with huzzas as he crossed on a ferry to the Maryland side.[28]

Lingering anger and suspicion found sartorial expression in the hunting shirts and tomahawks that several members of the House of Burgesses wore when they met in Williamsburg on June 1. Dunmore had called them into session at Dartmouth's direction to consider what the governor described in his opening remarks as the "benevolent Tender" of the House of Commons. The burgesses had barely begun their deliberations on North's proposed terms when news arrived that a group of young men attempting to break into the magazine had been badly wounded by a shotgun placed inside and rigged to fire at the tripping of a spring, sparking intense public outrage that eventually led to a mob storming the magazine two days later. The forced entry infuriated Dunmore, who spitefully refused to hand over the keys to the magazine when requested to do so by a delegation of burgesses. Tensions ratcheted up even further amidst rumors that a detachment of marines from the H.MS. *Fowey* was headed to town to protect the governor, causing the House to request that Williamsburg's independent company be mustered as a defensive precaution. Although Dunmore

King George III
by Allan Ramsay, 1762

initially attempted to de-escalate the reignited crisis by apologizing for his handling of the key request, offering to return the seized powder, and agreeing to meet with the Assembly to discuss the situation, on the morning the meeting was to take place he slipped away from the palace and took refuge on the *Magdalen*, never to return.[29]

Virginia's governor was thus under the protection of the Royal Navy when he received the burgesses' response to North's offer, which was delivered to him on board the *Magdalen* in the form of an "address" presented by a contingent of five members selected for that purpose. Based on a resolution composed by Thomas Jefferson and approved by the House on June 10, the address unequivocally rejected the proposal, concluding that it "only changes the form of oppression, without lightening its burthen." Declaring that "the British Parliament has no right to intermeddle with the support of civil government in the Colonies," the burgesses asserted that Virginians alone were the judges of their own taxes and that acceptance of the proffered terms would mean saddling themselves "with a perpetual tax adequate to the expectations and subject to the disposal of Parliament alone," stripping them of the checks on royal power they had long enjoyed.[30]

They further argued that even if the requisite contributions were made, the implicit claim that Parliament possessed the authority to restrict colonial trade, maintain standing armies, extend admiralty jurisdiction, abrogate the colonists' right to trial by jury, and transport them "into other Countries to be prosecuted for criminal Offences" demonstrated the absence of any genuine desire to reconcile. The address also affirmed Virginia's unity with the other colonies, insisting that the House would leave any "Final determination" on the proposal to the representatives attending "the General Congress now sitting," to whom they also referred "the discovery of that proper method of representing our well founded grievancies which his Lordship assures us

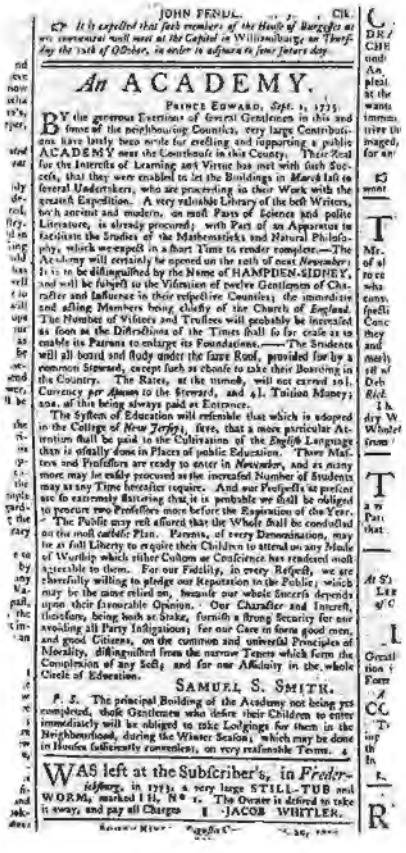
will meet with the attention and regard so justly due to them." Acting on that pledge, Jefferson departed for Philadelphia with a copy of his draft resolution in hand, which would form the basis of Congress's similar rejection of the proposal later that summer.[31]

Just five days after the House sent Dunmore their formal reply, a force of 3,000 British troops launched an assault against fortifications that New England militiamen had hastily erected overnight on the heights of Charlestown Neck overlooking Boston harbor, and on their third attempt they succeeded in capturing the American positions when the defenders ran out of ammunition. Although they accomplished their objective, the British suffered a proportionally enormous 1,054 casualties that included 100 commissioned officers, leading Major General Henry Clinton to later remark in his diary that a "few more such victories would have shortly put an end to British dominion in America." News of the battle—in which American casualties numbered 450 with 140 killed—exerted a powerful influence over the proceedings of a divided Second Continental Congress, sharpening the delegates' awareness that a full-scale war was already underway even as a minority faction remained committed to further supplication in the hope of "stopping the further effusion of blood." These principled "trimmers," led by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, insisted on making a final appeal directly to the King and steered Congress toward the adoption, on July 5, of the so-called *Olive Branch Petition,* which was replete with expressions of loyalty and deference to the Crown and besought George III to interpose his authority to secure a "happy and permanent reconciliation" between the colonies and Great Britain.[32]

Yet the majority exacted a political price for swallowing their "disgust" at consenting to this dovish effort on the following day, when Congress also issued a *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms* that denounced General Gage's proclamation labeling the

colonists as "rebels and traitors" and condemned him for substituting martial law for civil justice, for sending troops under his command to make "an unprovoked assault on the inhabitants" of Massachusetts, and otherwise for "exerting his utmost power to spread destruction and devastation around him." The *Declaration* closed by asserting that such actions, undertaken at the behest of Gage's "ministerial masters," had reduced the colonies to a stark choice between "unconditional submission" to tyranny or resistance by force. "The latter," Congress proclaimed, "is our choice."[33]

If the Continental Congress exhibited something of a split personality during the summer of 1775, the Virginia Convention did not when it convened at Henrico Church for the third time in a session that would last from July 17 to August 26. Although Peyton Randolph had issued the call for the Convention on June 26, eleven days after the adjournment of what would prove to be the final session of the House of Burgesses, when he brought the meeting to order he was cognizant of Congress's paired actions, having been informed of them in private correspondence from Virginia's representatives in Philadelphia.[34] As a result, the Convention moved quickly and decisively toward erecting what amounted to a provisional government capable of defending the colony against British forces, particularly the naval threat posed by the fleet of warships operating under Dunmore's command in the Chesapeake Bay. After resolving that "a sufficient armed force be immediately raised and embodied, under proper officers, for the defense and protection of this colony," the Convention passed an "ordinance"—a term used instead of "law" because of the delegates' fastidious awareness of the extralegal nature of their proceedings—that reorganized Virginia's military establishment by dividing the colony into fifteen military districts for more efficient administration. Each district was to raise a company of 68 men who would enlist for



JOHN FENDL. &c.

☞ *It is expected that such members of the House of Burgesses as are conveniently well meet at the Capitol in Williamsburg, on Thursday the 19th of October, to enter in measures for some future day.*

An ACADEMY.

PRINCE EDWARD, *Sept.* 1, 1775.

BY the generous Exertions of several Gentlemen in this and some of the neighbouring Counties, very large Contributions have lately been made for erecting and supporting a public ACADEMY near the Courthouse in this County. Their Real for the Interests of Learning and Virtue has met with such Success, that they were enabled to let the Buildings in *March* last to several Undertakers, who are proceeding in their Work with the greatest Expedition. A very valuable Library of the best Writers, both ancient and modern, on most Parts of Science and polite Literature, is already procured; with Part of an Apparatus to facilitate the Studies of the Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy, which we expect in a short Time to render complete.—The Academy will certainly be opened on the 10th of next *November*; It is to be distinguished by the Name of HAMPDEN-SIDNEY, and will be subject to the Visitation of twelve Gentlemen of Character and Influence in their respective Counties; the immediate and ruling Members being chiefly of the Church of *England*. The Number of Visitors and Trustees will probably be increased as soon as the Dimensions of the Times shall so far cease as to enable its Patrons to enlarge its Foundations.—The Students will all board and study under the same Roof, provided for by a common Steward, except such as choose to take their Boarding in the Country. The Rates, at the utmost, will not exceed 20*l.* Currency *per Annum* to the Steward, and 4*l.* Tuition Money; one of the being always paid at Entrance.

The System of Education will resemble that which is adopted in the College of *New Jersey*, save, that a more particular Attention shall be paid to the Cultivation of the *English* Language than is usually done in Places of public Education. Three Masters and Professors are ready to enter in *November*, and as many more may be easily procured as the increased Number of Students may at any Time hereafter require. And our Presidents at present are so extremely flattering that it is probable we shall be obliged to procure two Professors more before the Expiration of the Year.

The Public may rest assured that the Whole shall be conducted on the most catholic Plan. Parents, of every Denomination, may be at full Liberty to require their Children to attend on any Mode of Worship which either Custom or Conscience has rendered most agreeable to them. For our Fidelity, in every Respect, we are cheerfully willing to pledge our Reputation to the Public; which may be the more relied on, because our whole Success depends upon their favourable Opinion. Our Character and Interest, therefore, being both at Stake, furnish a strong Security for our avoiding all Party Indignation; for our Care in form good men, and good Citizens, on the common and universal Principles of Morality, distinguished from the narrow Tenets which form the Complexion of any Sect; and for our Affiduity in the whole Circle of Education.

SAMUEL S. SMITH.

P. S. The principal Building of the Academy not being yet completed, those Gentlemen who desire their Children to enter immediately will be obliged to take Lodgings for them in the Neighbourhood, during the Winter Season; which may be done in Houses sufficiently convenient, on very reasonable Terms.

WAS left at the Subscriber's, in *Fredericksburg*, in 1773, a very large STILL-TUB and WORM, marked I H, N° 1. The Owner is desired to take it away, and pay all Charges. JACOB WHITLER.

Samuel Stanhope Smith placed this notice in the Virginia Gazette *to announce the name and imminent opening of his new college. In it he proclaimed the goal of the institution, "to form good men and good citizens."*

one year and serve in one of two regiments of regular troops, as well as a battalion of "minutemen" who could be called into duty at a moment's notice to support the regular regiments while the larger body of the militia was mustered.[35]

To pay for these measures, another ordinance authorized the issuing of £350,000 in paper currency that would be redeemed through a series of taxes levied on carriages, tithables, and land over a seven-year period that would begin in 1777. Civil administration was also placed on a more regular footing through an ordinance directing that the selection of delegates to the Convention be henceforth "conducted as elections for Burgesses" and that restricted the size of the county committees to 21 members elected annually, who were "to confine" their actions "within the line of duty prescribed" by the Convention and the Continental Congress and "not assume to themselves any other power or authority whatever." Finally, an eleven-member Committee of

Safety was created that would act in an executive capacity when the Convention was not in session, and which was empowered to ensure that the sundry ordinances adopted were duly complied with. Collectively, these steps effectively eradicated what had remained of royal authority and treated Dunmore not as a constitutional governor but as an external enemy. When the delegates adjourned in late August, Virginia possessed a fully functioning revolutionary regime—complete with an executive council, fiscal authority, and military command structure—marking a decisive transition from resistance to organized self-rule.[36]

While these myriad developments were unfolding over the course of the tumultuous spring and early summer of 1775, Samuel Stanhope Smith was away from Prince Edward on an extended trip to the "Northern Provences" to obtain the "Books, and mathematical and Philosophical apparatus" that were "immediately necessary" to begin instruction at the academy and to engage a qualified assistant to join him on the faculty. At a special called meeting the previous February, the Hanover presbyters had directed that he be supplied with £400 to buy what was needed for classes to begin and directed that he seek the "advice and concurrence" of several ministers and merchants in Pennsylvania and New York when making his selections. The trip was necessary because the required items could not be procured from Britain owing to the restrictions of the Continental Association, which the presbyters allowed "may continue a considerable time," and so they ordered that the "visitors and managers" charged with collecting the money allocated for Smith's use send the designated sum to him in Philadelphia "before the first of May next."[37]

Smith departed in mid-March, just before the opening of the Second Virginia Convention, and returned in mid-to-late July just as the Third Convention was getting underway. On both legs of the

journey he made brief visits to Montpelier, the Orange County home of another friend from his days at the College of New Jersey, Colonel James Madison, Jr., whose hospitality Smith reciprocated by offering to deliver a letter from Madison to William Bradford, a mutual friend with whom Smith likely lodged while in Philadelphia. Upon his arrival there, however, Smith learned that the men appointed to collect the subscribed money had only managed to forward a letter of credit for £300 and £20 in cash, compelling him to draw £40 on his own account to complete his purchases and pay for transporting everything to Virginia.[38]

James Madison
BY GILBERT STUART 1784

He also managed to secure commitments from his brother John Blair Smith and John Springer—both of whom were also graduates of the College of New Jersey—to serve as his assistants, and while he was in Princeton recruiting them he succeeded in winning the hand of Anna Witherspoon, daughter of the College's President John Witherspoon, who was Smith's intellectual mentor and a future signer of the Declaration of Independence. Following their wedding on June 28, Smith decided to linger for a few days in Princeton and then stop at his parents' home in Pequea, Pennsylvania, for a brief visit on the way home, and asked Bradford to inform Madison of his altered itinerary lest Madison suppose that Smith "had returned [to Prince Edward] without calling upon you."[39]

Preparations to open the academy had progressed far enough by the first of September that Smith felt the time was ripe to solicit students through an advertisement that he placed in four consecutive numbers

of John Dixon and William Hunter's version of the *Virginia Gazette* beginning on October 7, which was just a week short of one year from the pivotal meeting at Cub Creek when he and the Hanover presbyters had first discussed the prospect of establishing a "publick school for the liberal education of youth" in Prince Edward. In the advertisement, Smith proclaimed that "the generous Exertions of several Gentlemen" had garnered "very large Contributions" for "erecting and supporting" what he termed "a public ACADEMY" that was "to be distinguished by the Name of HAMPDEN SIDNEY" and begin operation under the general supervision of "twelve Gentlemen of Character and Influence in their respective Counties," with those most actively involved "being chiefly of the Church of *England*." Smith informed readers that the backers intended to add more "Visitors and Trustees" as circumstances permitted further expansion, while also noting that enough funds had already been raised to engage contractors the previous March, so that construction of the buildings was proceeding "with the greatest Expedition." He expressed confidence that the school would "certainly be opened on the 10th of next *November*" and that all students would eventually be accommodated "under the same roof" and looked after by "a common Steward" if that was their preference. The cost of attendance, he promised, would "at the utmost" not "exceed £10 Currency per annum" for board and "£4 Tuition Money."[40]

Volume Two deals with John Hampden and Algernon Sidney and their importance to the Founders.

He further added that a "valuable Library of the best Writers, both ancient and modern, on most Parts of Science and Polite Literature" had already been obtained, along with "Part of an Apparatus to facilitate the Studies of the Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy" that would soon be complete. He described the proffered curriculum as resembling "that which is adopted in the College of New Jersey,"

though with "a more particular attention" paid "to the Cultivation of the *English* language" than was customary at other "Places of Public Education" in America, and observed that while instruction would commence under "Three Masters and Professors" the initial level of interest indicated that "two Professors more" were likely to be added to the faculty before "the Expiration of the Year." He also offered assurance to parents that the academy would be conducted on "the most *catholic* [*i.e.,* universal] Plan" rather than adhering to "the narrow Tenets" of a particular denomination, and that their sons would therefore be allowed to attend any church "which either Custom or Conscience has rendered most agreeable to them." He closed by stating that with "the Character and Interest" of the faculty, trustees, and visitors at stake, the public should have complete faith in their pledge "to form good men and good Citizens on the common and universal Principles of Morality," as well as their commitment to providing a complete and well-rounded education. [41]

The content of the advertisement included several elements that would have been clear enough to contemporaries but whose meaning and import are perhaps less readily apparent to modern readers. The very decision to name the academy, for instance, was a political choice, since until that point Presbyterian educational institutions in the colonies had been identified exclusively by their locations—such as the schools at Faggs Manor and Pequea in Pennsylvania or the "New Ark academy" in Delaware.

John Hampden and Algernon Sydney loomed large in the ideological ethos of Whig politicians in both Britain and America throughout the eighteenth century and were frequently invoked in discourse defending the liberty and rights of British subjects. Naming the academy in their honor was therefore not only a departure from customary practice but a deliberate act that would

have unmistakably signaled to readers a strong support for the patriot cause. However, Smith—together with the trustees and presbyters who most likely approved of the advertisement—still conceived of the term "citizens" in the classical republican sense of denoting men whose character and education rendered them fit for participation in public life. This usage would have closely mirrored that of the Anglican clergyman William Smith, the first provost of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), who in a widely-read 1753 treatise describing the idealized curriculum of a fictional colonial college had repeatedly insisted that "forming Youth to act in their proper Spheres as good Men and good Citizens ought always to be the Object of Education." [43]

Indeed, it seems almost certain that Samuel Stanhope Smith co-opted the phrase from William Smith's work, perhaps thinking that influential members of his audience would recognize the reference. After all, echoing one of the colonies' leading Anglican commentators on the proper purpose of education could only have helped to assuage any reservations that supporters of the established church might have felt about sending their sons to a school associated with Presbyterians. The emphasis that the advertisement placed on the more active trustees "being chiefly of the Church of England" and the academy being run on "the most catholic Plan" demonstrates that Smith, the trustees, and the presbyters were all well aware that such prejudicial sentiments potentially existed. [44]

It was perhaps partly for that same reason that the Hanover Presbytery decided to augment the lay presence among Hampden-Sydney's trustees by extending invitations to Patrick Henry, Colonel John Tabb of Amelia County, Colonel William Cabell, Jr., of Amherst, and James Madison, Jr., at a meeting held in Prince Edward in early November 1775. All four of the new Board members were

Anglicans—though only nominally so in Madison's case—who were friendly to dissenters, and their addition both extended the geographic reach of the academy's connections and deepened its ties to the patriot cause. Henry was able to serve because he had resigned from the Continental Congress to take command of the 1st Virginia Regiment following his election to that post by the Third Virginia Convention, which had also chosen Tabb and Cabell as members of the Committee of Safety. Madison, who was just shy of 25 years old at the time, had been elected in December 1774 to a position on the county committee of Orange, which his eponymous father chaired.[45]

Although Smith's advertisement had optimistically stated that "the Number of Visitors and Trustees" would "be increased as soon as the Distractions of the Times" diminished enough for the academy's patrons to "enlarge its Foundations," any hopes that Virginians still may have harbored for peaceful reconciliation with Britain collapsed that same November with the publication of two proclamations, the first issued by the king and the second by their erstwhile governor, Lord Dunmore. Word of George III's official rejection of the *Olive Branch Petition*—the very existence of which had previously been kept secret—likely reached America on November 9, the same day the Hanover presbyters adjourned their meeting, since a paraphrased version of his *Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition* appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* the next day and the available evidence suggests that news of his refusal to accept the petition while seated on the throne crossed the Atlantic along with printed copies of his edict.[46]

The proclamation claimed that "many of our Subjects in divers Parts of Our Colonies and Plantations in *North America,* misled by dangerous and ill designing Men, and forgetting the allegiance which they owe to the Power that has protected and supported them" had

"at length proceeded to open and avowed Rebellion, by arraying themselves in a hostile Manner, to withstand the Execution of the Law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levying War against us." The king therefore ordered that "all our Officers, civil and military, are obliged to exert their utmost Endeavours to suppress such Rebellion, and to bring the Traitors to Justice." When coupled with his public refusal to even read the final appeal for peace that the Continental Congress had sent him, the king's proclamation in effect served as his answer, and amounted to a declaration of war on his American subjects.[47]

Virginians had barely had time to absorb the severity and import of the king's words before they were confronted with the proclamation issued by Dunmore, which initially circulated in broadside form following his victory over a force of militia at Kemp's Landing in Princess Anne County on November 15 and was first printed in the *Virginia Gazette* nine days later. In it, he declared the colony to be under martial law and required every "Person capable of bearing Arms, to resort to His Majesty's STANDARD, or be looked upon as Traitors to His Majesty's Crown and Government, and thereby become liable to the Penalty the Law inflicts upon such Offences; such as forfeiture of Life, confiscation of Lands, &c." Even more ominously, he followed through on the threats he had made during the chaotic days following the gunpowder incident by declaring as free "all indented Servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,)" and calling upon those who were "able and willing to bear Arms" to join "His Majesty's Troops as soon as may be, for the more speedy reducing of this Colony to a proper Sense of their Duty, to His Majesty's Crown and Dignity."[48]

While Virginians viewed Dunmore's emancipation and arming of the enslaved as particularly egregious and incendiary, in light of the king's action the proclamation of their "late Governor," as one member

of the Committee of Safety called him, was otherwise hardly a surprise. The difficult road ahead was now clear even to "trimmers" who had stubbornly persisted in advocating for caution and restraint: resolution of what the *Olive Branch Petition* had euphemistically called "the present controversy" between Britain and the colonies would now be decided on the battlefield.[49]

It was thus in a dark yet determined mood that the delegates to the Fourth Virginia Convention gathered at Henrico Church on December 1, 1775. The call for the meeting had been issued by Robert Carter Nicholas, who, owing to the death of Peyton Randolph in Philadelphia the previous October, had assumed the role of acting president. On the first day Edmund Pendleton was elected as the late Speaker's successor as President, and he then proceeded to direct that the Convention would adjourn and reconvene three days later at the College of William and Mary.

One matter that required attention after the month-and-a-half-long session came to order again in Williamsburg was the election of a replacement for Randolph as representative to the Continental Congress. The demands of the deepening imperial crisis had taken their toll on Virginia's original delegation. Washington had left to assume command of the Continental Army in June 1775 and been replaced by Thomas Jefferson. Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendelton had resigned to assume posts in the revolutionary regime created by the Third Virginia Convention while Richard Bland had also vacated his seat due to advanced age, leading to the selection of Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, and George Wythe as replacements. Carter Braxton was now elected to succeed the deceased Randolph, thus completing the slate of delegates who would sign the Declaration of Independence on Virginia's behalf.

The remainder of the Fourth Convention was largely taken up

with expanding the colony's military establishment, work that took on added urgency following the Battle of Great Bridge on December 9. In that engagement, Virginia's two full-time regiments fought with Dunmore's mixed force of regulars and loyalist volunteers—including the Ethiopian Regiment, composed of formerly enslaved men—for control of a strategic causeway and bridge crossing the Elizabeth River near Norfolk. The clash ended with the British retreating to their small fleet of warships and armed transports moored off the town, which was subsequently shelled and set afire at Dunmore's command.[50]

Despite the Virginia regiments having proved themselves up to the task of defeating Dunmore, increasing requests for support from General Washington and rumors of an impending full-scale British invasion of the southern colonies induced the delegates to raise an additional seven regiments of regular troops, which brought the total in service up to nine, with each of the three Tidewater peninsulas and the Southside of the James River being allocated two regiments apiece for defensive purposes and the Eastern Shore receiving one.[51]

The economic powers of the Committee of Safety were also enlarged beyond what any colonial government had enjoyed by authorizing it to establish mills to produce gunpowder, make contracts with private suppliers for the purchase of munitions, and ration saltpeter and sulfur. Finally, to maintain order, the county committees were directed to appoint sheriffs, who had previously received their commissions from the governor after being nominated by the sitting members of the county courts. Moreover, in response to Dunmore's ongoing blockade of the Hampton Roads area, on the last day of the session the Convention adopted a resolution opening the colony's ports to the ships of all nations except those of Britain, Ireland, and the British West Indies, in effect destroying the imperial commercial system that had governed the transatlantic tobacco trade

since Parliament's passage of the *Acts of Trade and Navigation* following the restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the English throne in 1660. Even with these steps, however, the delegates hedged their bets on the prospect of Virginia remaining a British dominion by extending the authority of the Committee of Safety for only one year and providing that the commissions issued to sheriffs by the county committees would last only until "the executive powers of government in this colony are restored to their proper channel."[52]

Volume Six deals with the College's built environment and the archeological dig on the site of the Academy Building.

According to historian Herbert Bradshaw, on New Year's Day 1776—the same day that Dunmore's bombardment and the targeted torching of loyalist homes by Virginia forces ignited a raging fire that engulfed the town of Norfolk—Hampden-Sydney held its first day of classes. John Springer had been "providentially detained" in Princeton, and so Smith "imployed Mr. Samuel Doak, as second assistant" on a temporary basis in his stead, while he also found it necessary to take on his fifteen-year-old brother-in-law David Witherspoon as a third assistant because the number of students enrolled was "encreasing beyond Expectation." Both of the new faculty members were fellow graduates of the College of New Jersey, and the Hanover presbyters readily approved of their hiring after being assured of their "Character and liberal Education."[53]

The rapidly expanding student body reached such a size by mid-April that the steward, Captain Philemon Holcombe, was prompted to place a notice in the *Virginia Gazette* claiming that he could no longer promise beds for new enrollees, and suggested that "if two Gentlemen will agree to send their Children together, [and] furnish and convey a Bed at their common Expence" they would "do me, and perhaps themselves, a Favour." With upwards of 75 students being accommodated in his own house, Holcombe understandably took the opportunity to also append

an advertisement stating that he would "give good Encouragement to a Man who understands cooking, and managing the Business of the Kitchen and Table in such a large Family."[54]

With the walls of the academy's main building still standing only about three feet high as late as May 1776, the environment in which instruction took place was necessarily crude. "On account of [the] scarcity of room for the students to study in," George Craghead, who was one of them, would later recall, "they obtained leave from the undertaker [*i.e.,* building contractor], Mr. Coleman, to erect eight or ten "little huts [using] the shingles that were intended to cover the Academy." Each hut was furnished with multiple planks "for three or four boys to sit upon," he continued, "and in the night a candle [was] placed in each hut" so that the students could continue "studying till 9 or 10 o'clock at night."[55]

The students in attendance at Hampden-Sydney during these early months had embarked upon their studies as subjects of the British Crown, but they would end their first term as citizens of the independent Commonwealth of Virginia. By February, rumors circulated that Parliament had passed the *Prohibitory Act,* and by the end of March those rumors hardened into certainty when copies reached America. Declaring that the colonies had "set themselves in open rebellion and defiance to the just and legal authority of the king and parliament," the act prohibited "all manner of trade and commerce" with them and stipulated that any vessels or cargoes seized in violation of the ban would "be forfeited to his Majesty, as if the same were the ships and effects of open enemies."[56]

John Adams felt "Act of Independency" was the "most apposite" name for the legislation, insisting it amounted to "a compleat Dismemberment of the British Empire" since it "throws the thirteen Colonies out of the Royal Protection, levels all Distinctions and makes us independent in

Spight of all our supplications and Entreaties." Richard Henry Lee had a similar reaction, writing to Patrick Henry that the measure had "to every legal intent and purpose dissolved our Government, uncommissioned every magistrate, and placed us in the high road to Anarchy." A majority of their colleagues in Congress concurred, and on May 10 they adopted a resolution declaring that by his approval of the "late Act" the king had "excluded the inhabitants of these United Colonies from the protection of his crown" and made plain that "the whole force" of Great Britain, "aided by foreign mercenaries," was to be exerted for their destruction—circumstances that compelled them to recommend that the "respective Assemblies and Conventions" of each colony proceed "to adopt such Government as shall, in the opinion of the Representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their Constituents."[57]

It was with that very object in mind that the delegates to the Fifth Virginia Convention had assembled at Williamsburg in the capitol building five days earlier, with Edmund Pendleton once again serving as president. After debating the matter for two days, the delegates adopted a resolution on May 15, 1776, instructing Virginia's representatives in the "General Congress" to introduce a motion "declaring the United Colonies free and independent states absolved from all allegiance to or dependence upon the crown and parliament of Great Britain," while simultaneously appointing a committee "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." Four trustees of Hampden-Sydney were among the thirty-six men eventually named to serve on the committee, and under the chairmanship of Archibald Cary of Chesterfield it produced the *Virginia Declaration of Rights,* unanimously approved on June 12, as well as a written constitution, which likewise received unanimous approval on June 29. The latter document opened with a lengthy catalogue of George

III's myriad "acts of misrule" before declaring that "the government of this country, as formerly exercised under the crown of Great Britain, is TOTALLY DISSOLVED," and then proceeded to establish the "future form of government in Virginia" by delineating the structure and powers of the "legislative, executive, and judiciary departments."[58]

But there was still much important work to do aside from the primary task of establishing the foundations of republican rule. The Convention passed a slew of ordinances that re-established legal continuity through the retention of the common law of England, applicable parliamentary and colonial statutes, and its own ordinances as the "rule of decision" until altered by the legislature. It addressed the military situation through measures intended to control loyalists, enlarge the army, redeploy forces in response to the movements of Dunmore and his fleet of British warships, and secure the western frontiers against anticipated attacks by native groups. The Convention also authorized amendments to the *Book of Common Prayer* to reflect the new political order and adopted a Commonwealth seal that appropriately featured Virtus, the Roman goddess of virtue, depicted as a female warrior standing triumphantly over a fallen tyrant.[59]

With the swearing-in of Patrick Henry as governor on July 6 as its culminating event, the two months of the Fifth Convention legislatively had remade Virginia into an independent and sovereign state. For many inhabitants it was no doubt a transition fraught with uncertainty, but for groups that had long been marginalized under the old colonial order it also offered new possibilities. Dissenters from the established church in particular, who were fully cognizant of their vital importance to the war effort, were emboldened by the sixteenth and final article of the *Declaration of Rights,* which through the intervention of James Madison (with support from Patrick Henry) was revised in committee to unequivocally declare that "all Men are

equally entitled to the free exercise of Religion according to the Dictates of Conscience." The Convention's adoption of the article touched off an at times contentious, decade-long debate about the future of religious establishment that eventually ended with passage in 1786 of the *Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom,* authored by Thomas Jefferson. Yet while both the Hanover Presbytery and several of Hampden-Sydney's leaders contributed to that debate in important ways, the academy itself did not become embroiled in it. Instead, when the trustees sought a charter and financial support from the now republican General Assembly in November 1776, their appeal was couched almost entirely in secular terms.[60]

Volume Three deals with the religious context of the Founding.

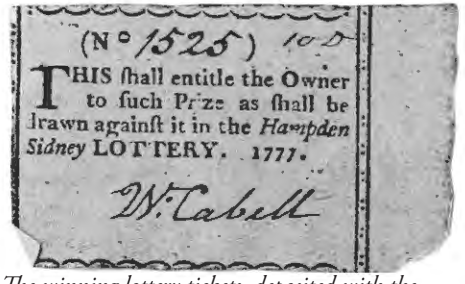
In the petition they referred to in their minutes as a "Memorial of the present state of Hampden Sidney College"—the first time that designation was used—the trustees sought to elucidate the various ways in which an independent Virginia would benefit from providing support to a second educational institution. They began by stating that the academy's name had been chosen "in memory of those great patrons of liberty and letters," and asserted that "literature, at all times ornamental, is now justly considered as necessary to the existence and stability of this rising Commonwealth." From that premise, the trustees advanced an argument that wartime conditions made immediate investment in education imperative rather than a luxury. Delaying action until the uncertain end of the conflict, they warned, threatened to destabilize their "extensive republic" while it yet remained "young and unexperienced," since the potentially heavy toll exacted upon the civil and military leadership from the "ravages of a destructive war" and the severing of traditional educational ties with Britain might leave it to be "guided by the councils and defended by the arms of unskilful and unlettered men."[61]

Although acknowledging the existence of an "amply endowed" college (William and Mary), the trustees contended that its proximity to military operations might leave it incapable of rendering to "its country that service it would otherwise be capable of doing." They also noted that "wise politicians will remember that it is dangerous to entrust so important a power as learning in the hands of a single person, or only a few," invoking the role that Oxford and Cambridge had played throughout English history in preserving "the liberties of that kingdom, which might have fallen a sacrifice if one of them had possessed the sole prerogative of education." The trustees stressed that they had no desire "to rival the publick seminary which is already established," but only asked that the Assembly provide the resources necessary "to erect such buildings as are necessary to accommodate the great number of students who daily apply for admission" to their own academy, whose "catholic" and nonsectarian design was "calculated to banish those invidious distinctions, which, however little they may have been felt under a monarchial government, are improper and injurious in a republick State." They further requested that the customary legal exemptions of incorporation be given to their "Board" so that it could serve the public more effectively, though they also deferred to the legislature's judgment as to what the "more important exigencies of the Commonwealth" would permit.[62]

Although this initial effort to secure a charter failed, such an attempt would have been virtually unthinkable while Virginia remained a colony, with the established church functioning as a central pillar of the Crown's authority. The initiative was only feasible because of the break with Britain, though ironically its outcome was likely determined by the very difficulties that attended the struggle for independence. It was, after all, almost certainly the financial demands of the myriad "exigencies" facing the new revolutionary government, rather than sectarian suspicion, that

caused the trustee's petition to languish in the legislature for over six months before the Board decided to withdraw it at a meeting held on April 11, 1777, a request that the House of Delegates (no doubt happily) granted on June 12.[63]

Unable to secure financial support from the General Assembly, at that same April meeting the trustees moved to hold a lottery to raise funds "for additional buildings" while also soliciting donations "for building a chapel" and paying Holcombe "for improvements made" to the steward's residence. The "scheme for a Lottery" they developed required the consent of the General Assembly, and in contrast to their original petition, their request for permission was handled expeditiously, being introduced on June 13 and receiving final approval from the Senate just two weeks later. According to the promotional notice published in the *Virginia Gazette* the following July, the lottery was intended to raise £1,206, with the drawing to be held at the courthouse in Prince Edward once all the tickets were sold. Although a drawing was eventually scheduled to take place a year later, the evidence suggests that the effort yielded little in the way of returns, and the intended additional accommodations were never constructed.[64]


(N° 1525) 10 D
THIS shall entitle the Owner to such Prize as shall be drawn againſt it in the *Hampden Sidney* LOTTERY. 1777.
W. Cabell

The winning lottery tickets, deposited with the Clerk of Court of Prince Edward County, were returned to the College on its bicentennial in 1976. They were signed by Trustee William Cabell.

The trustees had submitted both of their petitions to the General Assembly from a position of strength. In their November 1776 memorial they had maintained that "considerably more than one hundred students have already applied to be received at the commencement of

the next session, and that they have the greatest reason to believe that number might be doubled, in a few months, if it were in the power of the Board to furnish them with proper accommodations." However, although trustee Caleb Wallace could report as late as April 1777 that the "Academy in Prince Edward flourishes beyond our most sanguine expectations," its financial circumstances became increasingly strained as the war progressed. The depreciation of Virginia's paper currency caused rampant inflation that forced the trustees to raise the cost of boarding to £20 per year in December 1777, and after Holcombe resigned as steward they found it increasingly difficult to find someone willing to assume the position on their proffered terms thereafter.[65]

No less concerning was the growing frequency of student withdrawals to enter military service. In the summer of 1777, there had been enough students of sufficient age to form a militia company that marched to Williamsburg under the command of John Blair Smith when a British force *en route* to take Philadelphia briefly touched at Norfolk and seemingly threatened the capital, prompting Governor Patrick Henry to summon troops for its defense. However, by the end of the year enough students were leaving to join units either on an individual basis or in small groups that the trustees were induced to provide for the return of any funds paid in advance for board or tuition to those who were drafted or chose to enlist. Samuel Stanhope Smith himself left to take a professorship in moral philosophy at the College of New Jersey in 1779 and the Hanover Presbytery chose as his successor his younger brother, who inherited the helm of an institution that, according to George Craghead, was beset by "trials and perplexities" which only continued to mount, until by the end of the war it was left "in a depressed state."[66]

Following the victory of the allied armies under Washington and Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, at Yorktown in October 1781, and with negotiations that would lead to the signing

of the Treaty of Paris in September 1783 approaching completion, the independence of Virginia and the United States was virtually assured. President John Blair Smith therefore endeavored to rescue the moribund academy by placing an advertisement in the October 26, 1782, edition of the *Virginia Gazette, and Weekly Advertiser*. "The confusions of the war have been very unfavorable to the cultivation of science in general, and to the interests of the Academy of Hampden Sidney in particular," he explained, but "the present more agreeable prospect of public affairs, has induced the Trustees to attempt the revival of it." Noting that the Board was currently engaged in "making the necessary repairs in the rooms of the principal buildings" and had hired a new steward, he informed the public that the "Academy will be open for the reception of students on the first of November," and expressed hope that "the friends of learning will patronize an institution capable of being eminently useful, in a country so extensive as Virginia."[67]

The response appears to have been favorable, for at their meeting the following March the trustees resolved once again to petition the General Assembly for "the incorporation of this Board." The committee appointed to craft the appeal submitted its memorial on May 16, 1783, and in contrast to the abortive effort of 1776 it moved rapidly through the House of Delegates—no doubt aided by the appointment of former governor Patrick Henry to the *ad hoc* committee charged with bringing it under initial consideration and reporting back to the full House. Although the original memorial does not survive, it was likely far briefer than its predecessor. As recorded in the *House Journal,* the trustees merely stressed "the increasing influence of the said Academy, and its growing importance to science" before expressing their hope of receiving "the patronage of the legislature" and requesting that "if the circumstances of the country will not admit of any other encouragement, they may be granted a charter." A draft bill "for incorporating the trustees of

Hampden Sydney, and affording them public assistance" was presented by the *ad hoc* committee on June 9 and approved without amendment by a committee of the whole House two weeks later. When the measure reached the Senate, however, the upper chamber struck the provision for "public assistance" and returned the amended bill to the House, which concurred and passed it on June 27. Two days later, John Tyler of Charles City and Archibald Cary, respectively the speakers of the House of Delegates and Senate, affixed their signatures to the engrossed copy of "An act for incorporating the trustees of Hampden Sydney," thus making the bill a law under the 1776 constitution.[68]

The enrolled statute enacted by the General Assembly described Hampden-Sydney as "an academy" that had been "founded in the county of Prince Edward" and "supported by the generous donations of a few public spirited citizens for several years past." The delegates and senators stated that they were "warmly impressed with the important advantages arising to every free state by diffusing useful knowledge among its citizens," and expressed their desire to give "patronage and support to such seminaries of learning as may appear to them calculated to promote this design." The statute accordingly declared that "after the passing of this act, the said academy shall obtain the name and be called the college of Hampden-Sydney," and constituted the president and trustees as a "body politic and corporate" endowed with "perpetual succession and common seal," together with all of the privileges and immunities attendant upon that legal status.[69]

Conclusion

The Assembly's action marked a significant moment, for it not only severed Hampden-Sydney's formal association with the Hanover Presbytery by vesting legal control in the President and Board of Trustees, but also brought to a close the story of its establishment amid imperial crisis, war, and revolution. The circumstances that informed its founding had imparted to the institution its name, chosen to honor two great champions of English liberty at a time when Virginia was still a British dominion and had yet to produce its own figures of comparable prominence.[70]

Yet while the College's mission had been articulated contemporaneously, its meaning had been profoundly altered by Virginia's revolutionary transformation from colony to commonwealth. The "citizens" whom the General Assembly referenced in the 1783 charter were an entirely different species of political being from the "citizens" contemplated by William Smith in 1753 or even Samuel Stanhope Smith in 1775 for, as the historian David Ramsay noted, "the principle of government being radically changed by the revolution, the political character of the people was also changed from subjects to citizens," each of whom now possessed "an individual's proportion of the common sovereignty." Americans had consequently been rendered "so far equal that none have hereditary rights superior to others," he contended, and each therefore enjoyed a more exalted "political condition" than noblemen, who were the mere "creatures of kings, and may be made [or unmade] by them at pleasure."[71]

The words "to form good men and good citizens" thus assumed a new and heightened significance beyond that which they had carried when the phrase first appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* advertisement. Unlike the ethos of deference and obedience that had pervaded the monarchical

social order of the colonial period, a free and democratic society demanded far more of its inhabitants if republican institutions were to be sustained and protected. As James Madison perceptively observed, "Popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowlege will for ever govern ignorance: and a people who mean to be their own Governours, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." Madison's insistence on the indispensable role of education in the success of the American experiment is no less true today than it was at the revolutionary founding of the College, Commonwealth, and Country two and a half centuries ago—and it is precisely for this reason that the central importance of Hampden-Sydney's mission will endure for generations to come.[72]

The Charter of 1783 gave the Trustees the authority to adopt a seal, which they based on that of the College of New Jersey. This example is from a 1799 diploma.

Notes

[1] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 9 October 1771, 16 October 1773, 14 April 1774, and 12-13 October 1774, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 3 vols., Archives and Special Collections, William Smith Morton Library, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, 2: 37, 51-58; William H. Whitsitt, *The Life and Times of Judge Caleb Wallace: some time a justice of the Court of Appeals of the State of Kentucky* (Louisville, KY, 1888), 15-20, 24-30.

[2] Rev. John McClintock and James Strong, eds., *The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature,* 12 vols. (New York, 1867-1887), 9:827.

[3] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 16 October 1773, 1-2 February 1775, 12 April 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2:51, 58, 135, 138-139.

[4] John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia,* 1775-1783 (Williamsburg, VA, 1988), 16-18, 21-22. A *Sederunt* (Latin for "they sat") refers to a formal sitting or prolonged session of a deliberative body, especially in Scottish courts and church assemblies. It can also refer to the list of attendees.

[5] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 16 October 1773, 1 February 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 135; "Hanover Presbytery to the Honorable the Speaker and the Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, 11 November 1774," *Central Presbyterian,* vol. 23, no. 44, 16 May 1888, 2. The original petition can be found in Virginia Colonial Papers, Accession No. 36138, State Government Records Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

[6] "A Bill for extending the Benefit of the Several Acts of Toleration to his Majesty's Protestant Subjects, in this Colony, dissenting from the Church of England," *The Virginia Gazette* (Rind), No. 307, 26 March 1772, 1. The amended version of the toleration bill as printed in the *Virginia Gazette* was slated to be read a third time (and thus passed) at a subsequent session of the Assembly that was supposed to begin in late June 1772 but which never took place owing to an elective prorogation by Dunmore. Although a session was called in March 1773 to address the urgent matter of counterfeit currency threatening the public credit, when the Burgesses preceded to pass several resolves establishing a Committee of Correspondence to coordinate resistance and information-sharing between all of the colonies as well as issuing a formal condemnation of the governor's conduct in trying several men from Pittsylvania County accused of forging paper currency, he responded by again proroguing the Assembly just eleven days after it had convened. The Hanover Presbytery's petition was ultimately received by the House of Burgesses during the last session

of the Assembly held under British authority in June 1775. See John Pendeleton Kennedy and H.R, McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia,* 13 vols. (Richmond, VA, 1905-1915), 12: 79, 194, 197, 249, 317; 13: 28, 33, 36, 124, 132, 189.

[7] Danby Pickering, ed., *The Statutes at Large, from Magna Charta to the End of the Eleventh Parliament of Great Britain,* vol. 30, pt. II, *Containing the Statutes of the Fourteenth Year of King George III* (London, 1774), 336–41 (Boston Port Act, 14 Geo. III, c. 19); 367–71 (Administration of Justice Act, 14 Geo. III, c. 39); 381–390 (Massachusetts Government Act, 14 Geo. III, c. 45); 410 (Quartering Act, 14 Geo. III, c. 54); 549-554 (Quebec Act, 14 Geo. III c. 83); Richard Henry Lee to Arthur Lee, 26 June 1774, in James Curtis Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee,* 2 vols. (New York, 1911), 1:114-118.

[8] Kennedy and McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses,* 13:124, 132; John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore, to William Legge, second earl of Dartmouth, 29 May 1774, Board of Trade and Secretaries of State, America and West Indies, Original Correspondence, Virginia (1774-1777), C.O. 5/1353, ff. 81-82.

[9] Lt. Governor Francis Fauquier had dissolved the House following its adoption of resolves against the Stamp Act in 1765. Governor Norborne Berkeley, baron de Botetourt, had done the same in 1769 when in a secret session the burgesses passed four resolves challenging Parliament's authority, the first of which claimed "that the sole Right of imposing Taxes on the Inhabitants of this his Majesty's Colony and Dominion of Virginia, is now, and ever hath been, legally and constitutionally vested" in their body. See Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1953), 92-102; Kennedy and McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses,* 10: 364; 11: 214-215, 218.

[10] William J. Van Schreeven, Robert L. Scribner, and Brent Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence,* 7 vols. (Charlottesville, VA, 1973–1983)1: 97-98, 101-102.

[11] *The Virginia Gazette, or Norfolk Intelligencer* (William Duncan and Co.), No. 9, 4 August 1774, 3; Schreeven and Scribner, *Revolutionary Virginia,* 1: 227-235.

[12] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia…*, 13 vols. (Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York, 1809-23), 5:326-344 (1746 Fee Statute, 19 Geo. II c. 6); 8:515-516 (1772 Extension

of 1746 Fee Statute, 12 Geo. III c. 4); Richard Henry Lee to Arthur Lee, 26 June 1774, in Ballagh, ed., *Letters of Richard Henry Lee,* 1:114-118.

[13] "The ASSOCIATION entered into by the American CONTINENTAL CONGRESS in Behalf of all the Colonies," Record Group 360: Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, National Archives Identifier 6277397, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), No. 1220, 22 December 1774, 2; (Pinkney), No. 447, 1 December 1774, 3; No. 449, 15 December 1774, 3; No. 450, 22 December 1774, 3; and No. 455, 26 January 1775, 2.

[14] "The ASSOCIATION entered into by the American CONTINENTAL CONGRESS."

[15] "A Bill for extending the Benefit of the Several Acts of Toleration"; Hanover Presbytery to the House of Burgesses, 11 November 1774.

[16] Lenora Higginbotham Sweeny, *Amherst County, Virginia in the Revolution* (Lynchburg, VA, 1951), 2; "Virginia Legislative Papers (Continued)," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* 18 (Jul. 1910): 262-265; Dale E. Bensen, "Wealth and Power in Virginia, 1774–1776: A Study of the Organization of Revolt" (PhD diss., University of Maine, 1975), 405-406; Charles Washington Coleman, "The County Committees of 1774-'75 in Virginia: I," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 1st ser., 5 (Oct., 1896): 94-106-255; *idem,* "The County Committees of 1774-'75 in Virginia: II," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 1st ser., 5 (Apr., 1897): 245-255; Herbert Clarence Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney College, Volume I: From Beginnings to the Year 1856* (Durham, NC, 1976), 16-18.

[17] Dartmouth to the Governours of the Colonies (circular), 19 October 1774, in Peter Force, ed., *American Archives: Consisting of a Collection of Authentick Records, State Papers, Debates, and Letters and Other Notices of Publick Affairs, the Whole Forming a Documentary History of the Origin and Progress of the North American Colonies; of the Causes and Accomplishment of the American Revolution; and of the Constitution of Government for the United States, to the Final Ratification Thereof,* 4th ser., vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1837), 881. Dartmouth to Dunmore, 3 August 1774 and Dunmore to Dartmouth 14 August 1774, in Board of Trade and Secretaries of State, America and West Indies, Original Correspondence, Virginia (1774), C.O. 5/1352, f. 113, 147-148.

[18] Dunmore to Dartmouth, 24 December 1774, C.O. 5/1353, 46-52.

[19] Dartmouth to Dunmore, 3 March 1775, C.O. 5/1353, f. 169; "House

in Committee, on American Papers, Debate on Lord North's Propositions for conciliating the Differences with America," 20 February 1775, *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803,* vol. 18 (London, 1813), 320-322, 335-338; *Journal of the House of Commons,* vol. 35 (London, 1803), 27 February 1775, 161.

[20] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 2:145.

[21] William Draper, *The Thoughts of a Traveller Upon Our American Disputes* (London, 1774), 18, 21; Samuel Johnson, *Taxation No Tyranny: An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress* (London, 1775), 84-85; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), no. 1218, 8 Dec. 1774, supplement, 2.

[22] Arthur Lee to Richard Henry Lee, 6 Dec. 1774, Mss1 L51 f 533-549, Lee Family Papers (1638-1867), Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, VA.

[23] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 2: 347-386; William Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry,* 3d ed. (Philadelphia, 1818), 116-124.

[24] Jon Kukla, *Patrick Henry: Champion of Liberty* (New York, 2017), 165-172. Thomas Marshall was the father of John Marshall, the future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Benjamin Harrison V would be Virginia's governor when Hampden-Sydney received a charter from the General Assembly in 1783. He was the father of future Hampden-Sydney student and President of the United States, William Henry Harrison, Class of 1791.

[25] William Wirt (1772-1834) reconstructed the accepted text of Henry's famous speech after consulting with men such as Jefferson and St. George Tucker who were present, and historians have consequently debated the merits and limits of his version as a source.

[26] Dartmouth to Thomas Gage, 27 January 1775, *Thomas Gage Papers, 1738–1807,* William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Dunmore to Dartmouth, 1 May 1775, CO 5/1353, ff. 137-138.

[27] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 3: 70-71; Kennedy and McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses,* 13: 231-37; Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia,* 3-6. That the militia forces assembling in various areas of the colony were aware of Dunmore's threat of emancipating the enslaved is evident in Lieutenant George Gilmer's remark that a contingent he was leading from Albemarle County had set out for Williamsburg "to demand satisfaction of Dunmore for the powder, and his threatening to fix his standard

and call over the negroes." See Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 3: 52.

[28] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 3: 100-101; Kukla, *Patrick Henry,* 184-185.

[29] Kennedy and McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses,* 13:173-175, 198, 206; ; Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia,* 42-43.

[30] Kennedy and McIlwaine, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses,* 13:1, 212-214, 219-221.

[31] *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789,* vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1905), 224-234.

[32] Christopher Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution Through British Eyes* (New York, 1990), 42-63; Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775–1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents,* ed. William B. Willcox (New Haven, CT, 1954), 18-19; *Journals of the Continental Congress,* 2:128–62.

[33] Peter L. Field, comp. and ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson,* 12 vols. (New York, 1904-05), 1:19; *Journals of the Continental Congress,* 2:140-157.

[34] Virginia Delegates in Congress to Peyton Randolph, 11 July 1775, in Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 3:229, 282-283.

[35] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:9-35; Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia,* 49-54. Congress's *Declaration for Taking up Arms* was printed in the *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), no. 480, 20 July 1775, 2-3.

[36] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:49-71; Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia,* 49-54.

[37] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 1-3 February 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2:136-139.

[38] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 8 November 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 70; James Madison to William Bradford, 17 March 1775, in William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, eds,. *The Papers of James Madison,* vol. 1, 16 March 1751–16 December 1779 (Chicago, 1962), 141-142. Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 15, 21-23.

[39] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 4 May 1776, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 76; Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 33; William Bradford to Madison 10 July and [18] July 1775, in William T. Hutchinson and

William M. E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison,* 1: 154-159. The several letters exchanged between Madison and Bradford (who was also a Princeton alumnus) establish the approximate dates of Smith's trip, since as noted in the text he stopped at Madison's plantation on his way north and again on his way home.

[40] *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), no. 1261, 7 Oct. 1775, 3; no. 1262, 14 Oct. 1775, 4; no. 1263, 21 Oct. 1775, 4; no. 1264, 28 Oct. 1775, 4; Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 14 October 1774, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2:57.

[41] The advertisement's statements regarding Hampden-Sydney's academic program and non-sectarian manner of operation closely mirrored in both spirit and language a statement that the Hanover presbyters had crafted at their February 1775 meeting, so Smith cannot properly be considered as the sole author. See Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 3 February 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 140.

[42] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 8 April 1772, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 40, 140

[43] [William Smith], *A General Idea of the College of Mirania; with a Sketch of the Method of Teaching Science and Religion, in the several Classes* (New York, 1753), 11, 14, 26, 60, 67. In eighteenth-century Britain and America, "Whigs" generally favored constitutional limits on royal power, parliamentary authority, and the defense of traditional English rights and liberties, whereas "Tories" tended to emphasize loyalty to the Crown, the preservation of established hierarchy, and deference to the royal prerogative.

[44] The Hanover Presbytery's February 3, 1775, minutes had explicitly acknowledged that "some Gentlemen who are unacquainted with our sentiments may encourage this Seminary with Reluctance because it is under the guardianship of this P[res]b[yter]y."

[45] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 8 November 1775, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 71-72; Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9: 49; Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 2: 207, 215, 3: 400-401; Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 27. Whereas Henry, Cabell, and Madison are listed as trustees on the 1783 statute granting Hampden-Sydney its charter, it is not certain that John Tabb ever accepted the invitation to serve as a trustee and actually became a member of the Board.

[46] *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), no. 41, 10 November 1775, 2; no. 43, (Dixon and Hunter), no. 1267, 18 Nov. 1775, 2; John Page to Thomas Jefferson, 11 November 1775, in Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, *1760–1776* (Princeton, NJ, 1950), 256-259. News of the king's refusal on September 1 to officially receive the *Olive Branch Petition* was reported in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on November 10, 1775, on the basis of "authentic intelligence from London on the last vessel" to arrive in Philadelphia, which doubtlessly also carried a copy of his *Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition.* See *Journals of the Continental Congress,* 3: 343. The *Olive Branch Petition* had been kept secret because the Continental Congress felt that "a publick communication, before it has been presented, may be improper." See Virginia Delegates to Peyton Randolph, 11 July 1775, in Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 3: 282-283.

[47] Force, *American Archives,* 4th ser., 3: 240-241;

[48] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 4:334-335; *Virginia Gazette (Purdie),* no. 41, 24 Nov. 1775, 2; (Dixon and Hunter), no. 1269, 2 Dec. 1775, 3.

[49] John Page to Thomas Jefferson, 24 [November 177]5, in Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* 1:264-266.

[50] Selby, The Revolution in Virginia, 69-79.

[51] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:75-77.

[52] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9: 85-86, 93-98.

[53] Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 31, 33-34; Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 4 May 1776, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2: 76;

[54] *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), no. 1290, 27 April 1776, 3.

[55] William Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1850) 1:400.

[56] Pickering, ed., *The Statutes at Large, from Magna Charta to the End of the Eleventh Parliament of Great Britain,* vol. 31 (Cambridge, 1776), 135–154 (Prohibitory Act, 16 Geo. III, c. 5); *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), no. 1286, 30 March 1776, 1-2.

[57] John Adams to Horatio Gates, 23 March 1776, in Robert J. Taylor, ed., *The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams,* vol. 4, February–August 1776 (Cambridge, MA, 1979), 58-60; Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 20 April 1776, in Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee,* 1:176–180; *Journals of the Continental Congress,* 3:342, 357-358.

[58] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 7:143, 158, 182-83, 208, 246, 273, 449-450; Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:126-128. The four Hampden-Sydney trustees who served on the committee appointed to compose a declaration of rights and framework of government were Patrick Henry, Jr., Paul Carrington, William Cabell, Jr., and James Madison, Jr.

[59] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:126-128. 135-149. Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 7:649-654, 708-709.

[60] Schreeven, Scribner, and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* 7:450, 456-458.

[6i] Hampden-Sydney Board of Trustee Minutes, 26 September 1776, 1:1, Bortz Library, Hampden-Sydney College, Hampden Sydney, VA; *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Williamsburg, on Monday the Sixth Day of May, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Six* (Richmond, VA, 1828), 58-59.

[62] *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (1776), 58-59. Despite their use of the term "College" in their minutes, the trustees referred to Hampden-Sydney as an academy throughout the version of the "Memorial" submitted to the General Assembly, although their description of William and Mary as both a "college" and a "publick seminary" suggests that not too much emphasis should be placed on the varying terminology. The petition's warning about William and Mary's exposed location would prove prescient, as the British army under Lord Charles Cornwallis briefly occupied Williamsburg during the campaign that led to the Battle of Yorktown in 1781.

[63] *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (1777), 45, 58, 63, 71, 74-75; Hampden-Sydney Board of Trustee Minutes, 11 April 1777, 1:4-5.

[64] *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (1777), 76, 81, 83, 86, 112; Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 9:321-322; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), no. 127, 4 July 1777, 4; Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 37-41.

[65] Hampden-Sydney Board of Trustee Minutes, 1777, 11 December 1777, 1:9-11; Rev. Caleb Wallace to Rev. James Caldwell, 3 April 1777, as quoted in Bradshaw, *History of Hampden-Sydney,* 38.

[66] "The Late Colonel Carrington," *Virginia Historical Register, and Literary Advertiser*, vol. 2 (July 1849): 166-167; Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 28

October 1779, Hanover Presbytery Minutes in Manuscript, 2:104-105; Foote, *Sketches of Virginia,* 1:403-404.

[67] "Hampden Sidney (Prince Edward)," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 2nd ser., 2 (July, 1922): 211-212.

[68] Hampden-Sydney Board of Trustee Minutes, 1777, 6 March 1783, 1:16; *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (1783), 8, 12, 44, 46, 85, 90-91, 99. The evidence in the *House Journal* suggests that the memorial submitted by Hampden-Sydney's trustees was perhaps similar in length and content to the petition asking for incorporation submitted by the trustees of Liberty Hall Academy (now Washington and Lee University) on 23 November 1782. See "Petition of the Trustees of Liberty Hall Academy," Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession Number 36121, Box 221, Folder 10, Library of Virginia, Richmond VA.

[69] Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large,* 11:272-275.

[70] By contrast, when the Reverend William Smith and the trustees of the "College of Chester" successfully secured a charter from the Maryland legislature in 1782, it was renamed "Washington College" in honor of the Continental Army's commander-in-chief, who at the time was the most widely beloved and respected hero of the Revolution.

[71] David Ramsay, *A Dissertation on the Manner of Acquiring the Character and Privileges of a Citizen of the United States* (Charleston, SC, 1789), 3-4. Notably, Ramsay also contrasted the political status of citizens with that of "Negroes," whom he classified as mere "inhabitants or residents" that lacked the same "connection with the state" and were therefore barred from "participation in its government."

[72] James Madison to William T. Barry, 4 August 1822, David B. Mattern, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Anne Mandeville Colony, eds., *The Papers of James Madison,* Retirement Series, vol. 2, *1 February 1820–26 February 1823* (Charlottesville, VA, 2013), 555-558.

IV.

From Academy to College: Hampden-Sydney in the Revolution

John C. Coombs

This volume examines the early development of Hampden-Sydney within the broader context of Virginia's transformation from British dominion to independent Commonwealth over the course of the revolutionary era. The tumultuous events roiling America in the last years of the imperial crisis with Great Britain— which president Samuel Stanhope Smith referred to as "the Distractions of the Times"—would exert a profound influence over the formative years of the new "public Academy" that extended far beyond the decision to name it after two great champions of English liberty. Virginia's struggle for independence and adoption of a republican constitution not only created the political conditions that allowed the College's leaders to successfully secure a charter of incorporation from the General Assembly in 1783, but would also give new import to the stated mission "to form good men, and good Citizens, on the common and universal principles of Morality" and through constant attention to "the whole Circle of Education."

V.

Climbing the Hill: African American History at Hampden-Sydney College

Caroline S. Emmons

In the early period of the college, enslaved individuals' labor and presence on campus helped shape the College's founding. While often unnamed in the College records, there is nevertheless abundant evidence of their contributions, which were critical in enabling the construction and operation of the campus. The institution of slavery itself was regularly debated in a variety of settings. After emancipation, African Americans continued to contribute in critical ways to the success of the college, as members of the staff and eventually, in the late 20th century, as students and even as President.

VI.

The First Buildings at Hampden-Sydney College: Their History, Architecture, and Archæology

Charles E. Pearson and Richard C. McClintock

Construction at Hampden-Sydney College began in the summer of 1775 and, by 1820, a dozen or so buildings existed at the school. By 1850, the original campus of the school was abandoned and the locations of the first buildings were forgotten. A 2017 geophysical survey revealed the buried traces of several original buildings. This volume presents what is known about the earliest buildings at the school and what we can learn from their archæological remains.