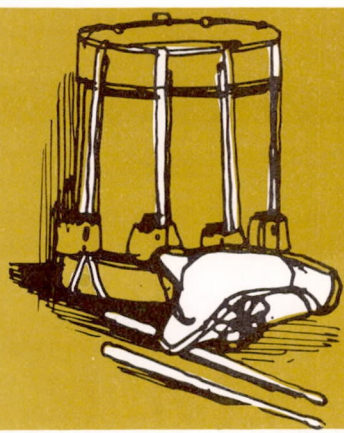


American Revolution Bicentennial

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“These Boisterous Times...”

# THE WEEK IN '76

\*Alexander Purdie, *Virginia Gazette*,  
January 1, 1776

## May 16–22, 1976

### May 17, 1776



PAMPHLET FILE

The *Virginia Gazette* reported the proceedings of the Convention on May 15 and printed the Resolution for Independence along with a description of the celebration in Williamsburg the following day.

In consequence of the above resolution, universally regarded as the only door which will lead to safety and prosperity, some gentlemen made a handsome collection for the purpose of treating the soldiery, who next day [May 16th] were paraded in Waller's Grove, before brigadier-general Lewis, attended by the gentlemen of the Committee of Safety, the members of the General Convention, the inhabitants of this city, etc. etc. The resolution being read aloud to the army, the following toasts were given, each of them accompanied by a discharge of the artillery and small arms, and the acclamations of all present:

1. The American independent states.
2. The Grand Congress of the United States, and their respective legislatures
3. General Washington, and victory to the American arms.

The Union Flag of the American states waved upon the Capitol during the whole of this ceremony, which being ended, the soldiers partook of the refreshment prepared for them by the affection of their countrymen, and the evening concluded with illuminations and other demonstrations of joy; every one seeming pleased that the domination of Great Britain was now at an end, so wickedly and tyrannically exercised for these twelve or thirteen years past, notwithstanding our repeated prayers and remonstrances for redress.

On March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress recommended that May 17 be “a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer” because of “impending calamity and distress” due to the “warlike preparations of the British Ministry to subvert our invaluable rights and priviledges, and to reduce us by fire and sword, by the savages of the wilderness, and to our own domestics, to the most adject and ignominious bondage.” Congress suggested that “Christians of all demoninations, to assemble for public worship, and abstain from servile labour on the said day.”

The day was marked in Williamsburg with a church service where the Reverend Thomas Price, chaplin to the Convention, “delivered an excellent sermon . . . to a very crowded audience.”

On the May 17, 1776, issue of his *Virginia Gazette* Alexander Purdie removed the colonial seal from the masthead and replaced it with the words: “THIRTEEN UNITED COLONIES. *United, we stand—Divided we fall.*”

## May 23–29, 1976

### May 25, 1776

Four very stout, good MULES to be sold, or exchanged for able Plough Horses or Mares, that will suit the Mountain Lands. Inquire of Mr. William Russell.

While mules were not widely used by Virginia planters in the eighteenth century there were some in the colony. Charles Carter of Cleve owned eight mules in 1764, and in 1767 a stray mule was found on Jamestown Island. Landon Carter watched his mules work “as if nature had intended they should be for labour.” In 1775 Theodorick Bland of Prince George County imported from

Malta "Midas, a remarkable large jack ass," noted for "the size and strength of the mules he gets."

William Russell, a bookkeeper and clerk, lived in Williamsburg next door to the Margaret Hunter shop. In 1778 he prepared the public accounts for the state and served as clerk to several committees of the House of Delegates as well as clerk to the Board of Trade and from 1786 to 1803 he was clerk of the Public Hospital.

### May 30-31, 1976

Any young, healthy, and strong man, not under 5 feet 7 inches high, that is free and willing to enlist as a MATROSS in my company of artillery, will please to repair to my quarters in Williamsburg, where he will be kindly received, have 3 l. advance money paid to him, besides new clothes, and 2 s. per day, for one, two, or more years, if not sooner discharged.

God save the Congress  
Dohicky Arundel

Dohicky Arundel was appointed captain of a company of continental artillery stationed in Williamsburg in March 1776. The company's first action was at Gwynn's Island in July 1776; Captain Arundel was killed by a bursting mortar. He was the only man lost during the battle of the patriot forces.

A matross was a soldier next in rank below a gunner who acted as the gunner's assistant. The position required strength because of the heavy equipment associated with artillery. Captain Arundel wanted men of over average size for his company. The average height of soldiers recruited at Chesterfield Court House in 1780 was slightly over 5 feet 7 inches—less than one inch shorter than the average American recruit in 1758.

*Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.*

