



“*These Boisterous Times...*” \*  
**THE WEEK IN '76**

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

**NOVEMBER 1976**

**November 1-6, 1976**



PAMPHLET FILE

**November 1, 1776**

I have received a Power from the Congress to contract for supplying the continental Troops within this Commonwealth with Provisions for the ensuing Year, the 2d and 7th Regiments to commence the 1st day of December next, and the Troops that are about to be raised as soon as they can be collected. Those who are desirous to engage to supply these Troops are requested to meet me in the City of Williamsburg the 21st Instant, with their Proposals.

W. Aylett D.C.G.

William Aylett was appointed by Congress “deputy commissary general for supplying the troops of Virginia with rations” on April 27, 1776. On the reorganization of the department of the commissary of purchases he was appointed on June 17, 1777, one of the four deputy commissary generals under Commissary General Joseph Trumbull. Aylett also acted as agent for carrying on the trade of the state and director of the public store in Williamsburg until December 3, 1777, when he resigned and was succeeded by Thomas Smith as state agent and William Armistead as commissary of stores for the state. He continued as commissary general until his death at Yorktown in 1781.

Before the war Aylett had served for several sessions in the House of Burgesses as a member from King William County. He was also a member of the convention that adopted the first constitution of Virginia.

**Williamsburg, November 1**

Last Saturday evening died suddenly, at Mr. Tazewell's in this city col. Richard Bland, one of the delegates for Prince George in his 68th year, near one half of which term he devoted to the publick service. He was a gentleman well acquainted with the constitution of his country, as well as with many valuable branches of learning.

Richard Bland was born in Williamsburg and was educated at the College of William and Mary and the University of Edinburgh. He later became an influential member of the House of Burgesses. In 1753 he condemned Governor Dinwiddie's attempt to impose a fee for issuing land grants as taxation without the people's consent, and in 1757 he was the author of the Two Penny Act, which, in claiming for Virginians the right of controlling their own taxation, was a preliminary step to the formal measures of the American Revolution. He also asserted the exclusive authority of the General Assembly of Virginia over the domestic affairs of the colony, and claimed that Virginia was an independent kingdom, under no subjection to Parliament, and only connected with England by the ties of the crown. This doctrine was considered a “prodigious innovation” in most parts of the country, although the patriots generally rested their cause upon it.

Bland served in the First Continental Congress and was a member of the Virginia Committee of Safety and the Convention of May 1776, which declared for independence and adopted the first state constitution. He held continued public office throughout the revolutionary period—from the Two Penny Act to the Declaration of Independence. Bland's knowledge of constitutional government helped formulate the rationale for the Revolution in Virginia.

**November 2, 1776**

On November 2 the Council ordered "that a warrant issue to Goldberry Hacket for twenty five pounds ten shillings for six Guns purchased of him by Captain Robert Anderson for the Publick Service."

Hacket, a gunsmith in Norfolk, had been in business with a cutler named Bird:

Bird and Hackett, Gunsmiths and Cutlers, at the sign of the Cross Guns, on Woodside's Wharf. Beg leave to inform the public, that they make all kinds of Guns and Pistols, in the neatest manner, and mend and clean old Guns. Likewise all sorts of Swords made, mended, and mounted, Cutlery made, and mended, Razors, Surgeons Instruments Ground and Set, in the best manner and at the lowest terms, for Ready Money. All orders from the Country, will be carefully compleated with dispatch.

When Norfolk was destroyed, Hacket moved to Williamsburg where he worked as a gunsmith in the Public Magazine.

**November 11, 1776**

Bill for the Removal of the Seat of Government of Virginia. Whereas great numbers of the Inhabitants of this Commonwealth must frequently, and of necessity resort to the seat of Government, where General assemblys are convened, Superior Courts are held and the Governor and Council usually transact the executive business of Government, and the equal rights of all the said Inhabitants require that such seat of Government should be as nearly central to all, as may be, having regard only to Navigation the benefits of which are necessary for encouraging the growth of a Town.

The Bill for the Removal of the Seat of Government, the preamble of which is above, was presented to the House of Delegates by Thomas Jefferson on November 11 and was rejected by a vote of 61 to 38.

This bill, the third effort to move the seat of government in Virginia, exhibited Jefferson's far-reaching legislative program, which included his endeavor to equalize advantages and opportunities between the Piedmont and Tidewater regions and his concern with defense measures. The bill was finally passed in 1779 and the capital moved to Richmond in 1780.

*Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.*



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation