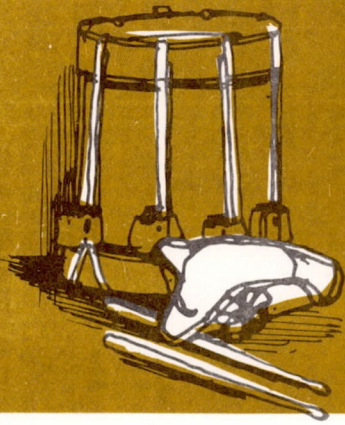


“These Boisterous Times...”
THE WEEK IN '76



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

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FEBRUARY 1976

February 1-7, 1976



PAMPHLET FILE

February 2, 1776

Excerpts from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* appeared in Purdie's *Virginia Gazette* on February 2 and in John Pinkney's on February 3. Paine's work was probably the most influential of all Revolutionary pamphlets and was designed to rally support to the Patriot cause. A new edition of *Common Sense* was announced in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on February 14, of which "several hundred are bespoke, 1000 for Virginia." Not everyone was enthusiastic about the book. Landon Carter thought it was "nonsense instead of *Common Sense*."

Williamsburg, Feb. 2, 1776

The subscriber intends moving up to Fredericksburg, where he will carry on the stocking making business to a greater extent than formerly. He will be much obliged to those who please to favour him with their work, and makes no doubt but what work he does will meet with the approbation of the publick, for which he will expect ready money.

Adam Allan.

Adam Allan arrived in Virginia from Great Britain in 1772 and established a "stocking manufactory" at Williamsburg. He may have been inclined to move to Fredericksburg because in September 1775 he managed to recover the "Great Seal and Crest of the Collony of Virginia" for Lord Dunmore.

In Fredericksburg, Allan's loyalist sympathies got him into trouble again. This time he was "stript naked to the waist, Tarr'd and Feather'd and in that Situation Carted through Fredericksburg upwards of two hours." Allan failed to mention how he so offended the citizens of the town. Somehow Allan managed to remain alive and finally escaped to the British lines in November 1776.

February 7, 1776

On February 7, the Committee of Safety unanimously appointed Edmund Dickinson captain of the "recruits to be raised" in the District of York. Dickinson, a Williamsburg cabinetmaker, plied his trade at Anthony Hay's old stand on Nicholson Street. In 1776 when the Governor's Palace was being refurnished for the new state governor, Dickinson supplied some of the furniture.

In 1777 Dickinson was promoted to Major of the 1st Virginia Regiment, and he was killed at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. George Washington believed that he had lost "a valuable officer." Notice of Dickinson's death appeared in the *Universal Magazine*, an English publication.

The Virginia Committee of Safety in Williamsburg appointed John James Beckley assistant clerk on February 7. Beckley, at this time only 18 years old, had worked

with John Clayton, clerk of Gloucester County, since his arrival in Virginia as an indentured servant in 1769. On June 22, 1779, Beckley was appointed clerk of the Virginia House of Delegates, and he was elected the first clerk of the United States House of Representatives in 1789.

February 8-14

February 10, 1776

The Committee of Safety appointed a committee to agree with James Anderson for the use of his blacksmith shop in Williamsburg for public service on February 10. Anderson had served as armorer at the Public Magazine since 1766 and was a successful blacksmith.

In March the committee agreed with Anderson to rent his shop and tools and to pay him and his workmen wages. The first extant copy of the contract is dated March 1777 when it was renewed:

Mr. James Anderson this day agreed to do Blacksmith's work for the Commonwealth of Virginia at his shop in Williamsburg on the following terms for six months, and for a longer time unless he shall give the Board one month's notice of his intention to decline the Business, or they shall give him the same notice of their intention to discontinue him viz. Mr. Anderson is to be allowed fifteen shillings per day for his own wages including Sundays, for the rent of his shop, six sets of Tools and eight Vices for the Gunsmiths Business at the rate of ninety pounds per annum, he is to be allowed 1/6 per day for boarding each work man, for his two forges and five apprentices three pounds per month each, and if he is deprived of either of them by any accident he is to supply their place with another Hand as good; He is to employ workmen as the public Business requires on the best terms he can, and charge the country with whatever wages he pays.

By 1779 Anderson's business had outgrown his shop so that it was necessary to rent the old Anthony Hay cabinet shop on Nicholson Street for more space. The shops were moved to Richmond in 1780, where they were heavily damaged by the British in January 1781.

Anderson continued in his capacity of public blacksmith until 1782 when he resigned and returned to Williamsburg, where he died in September 1798.

