



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

B.B.
H.D.
A.H.
B.S.
P.H.
S.R.
G.H.
H.H.

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

JULY 1976

July 1-10, 1976

July 1, 1776

On June 29 the Convention elected Patrick Henry governor, and on July 1 the Convention resolved:

That the former resolution of this Convention for appropriating the Palace, and as many of the out buildings as might be necessary for the purpose of a public Hospital, be now rescinded; and that the committee appointed to notify the Governour his appointment do also inform him, the Convention desire he will make the same his place of residence.

On Friday, July 5, 1776, the Convention appropriated £1,000 to purchase furniture for the Palace. The furniture “belonging to the country” already in the Palace was to be appraised and deducted from the £1,000. Some furniture was purchased from citizens such as William Byrd and other pieces from Richard Booker and Benjamin Bucktrout, local cabinetmakers. James Honey, another Williamsburg cabinetmaker, was paid for repairing furniture in the Palace.

July 5, 1776

On this day the Committee of Safety was dissolved and the Convention adjourned until October 1776, when the first General Assembly under the new constitution convened. The last act of the Convention was to accept the report of the “committee appointed to devise a proper seal for this Commonwealth”:

TO BE ENGRAVED ON THE GREAT SEAL

VIRTUS, the genius of the commonwealth, dressed like an Amazon, resting on a spear with one hand, and holding a sword in the other, and treading on TYRANNY, represented by a man prostrate, a crown fallen from his head, a broken chain in his left hand, and a scourge in his right. In the exergon, the word VIRGINIA over the head of VIRTUS: and underneath the words *Sic semper tyrannis*. On the reverse, a groupe. LIBERTAS, with her wand and *pileus*. On one side of her CERES, with the *cornucopia* in one hand, and an ear of wheat in the other. On the other side AETERNITAS, with the glove and phoenix. In the exergon, these words: Deus Nobis Haec Otia Fecit.

Richard Henry Lee wrote from Williamsburg on July 6 that “A new Great Seal, adapted to our State is ordered to be made, and now, we have in all respects a full and free Government which this day begins the exercise of its powers.”

July 6, 1776

Patrick Henry was inaugurated as the first governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Henry was so ill at the time that John Page, a member of the Council, was worried that Henry might die before he could be given the oath of office. If that happened, then there would be no executive authority because the members of the Council could not legally act until they had received their oaths of office from the governor. Page wrote Thomas Jefferson:

The Post being about to set out in a few Hours, in which Time I am to wait on our new Governor to administer to him the Oaths, to be qualified by him to act in my new Department, and to dispatch some public Business of Importance.



PAMPHLET FILE

I must immediately attend the Governour who is very ill. If he should die before we have qualified and chosen a President the Country will be without any head—every Thing must be in Confusion. But four of our Board are in Town, who cannot chuse a President.

John Page was elected president of the Council and actually served as chief executive during Henry's absence because of sickness. Henry did not attend the council until September 17, 1776.

July 9, 1776

Virginia troops commanded by General Andrew Lewis drove Lord Dunmore and his band of followers from Gwynn's Island. John Page bragged: "Ld. Dunmore has had a most compleat Drubbing. The Fleet left 7 fine Cables and Anchors worth at least £1200, three of their Tenders compleatly furnished fell into our Hands."

For the next month Dunmore's fleet cruised the Potomac River, burning one plantation and terrorizing the area in search of water and provisions. Dunmore left Virginia for New York on August 5.

July 11–17, 1776

July 14, 1776

Strayed. or Stolen, from the Subscriber, a likely bald-faced sorrel Horse, with a short Switch Tail and Mane, one fore and one hind Leg a little white, branded on the near Buttock TN, his breast marked by going in a Gear, trots and canters. Whoever brings the said Horse to me, opposite Mr. Gabriel Maupin's, shall have Twenty Shilings Reward.

Morto Brien.

Morto Brien was a chandler and soapmaker who moved to Williamsburg after the destruction of Norfolk, where he had been in business for a long time. On July 26 he announced that he intended to carry on his trade in Williamsburg:

The Subscriber (lately from Norfolk) begs leave to inform the publick, that he has erected a manufactory of SOAP and CANDLES in this city, and intends carrying on his business in the best manner. He will give 7d. halfpenny a pound for tallow, 10d. for myrtle wax, 2s. 6d. for picked cotton, and 1s. for tow wick; for wood ashes 7d. half peny per bushel, and 1s. 3d. for tobacco ashes. He begs the inhabitants in and about the city to be careful of their ashes, as he shall be able to supply them with good soap cheaper than they can make it in their families.

Compiled by Harold B. Gill, Jr.



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation