



#3 1994

A Chronology Of The Revolutionary War

with emphasis on Bedford County, Pennsylvania's role

Continued

1773

In the year 1773 the East India Company was on the verge of bankruptcy. The London Exchange saw the company's shares drop from 280 to 160 over the last year or so. One might presume that this shouldn't have made much of a difference to anyone but the shareholders. The fact that the company possessed a surplus of nearly 17 million pounds of tea in its warehouses in England also might not have bothered anyone except for the company's auditors. The one thing that the company did have, that was of interest to the British government, was a strategic grasp on the India subcontinent. The East India Company beseeched Parliament to help it find some way to get rid of the surplus tea so that the company could get back on its feet.

On 27 April, 1773 the Commons passed a bill that would become known in England as well as in the colonies as the *Tea Act*. This Act, to take effect 10 May, 1773, would waive all duties on teas exported to the colonies. That would make it feasible (and inexpensive) to get rid of the surplus. On the other end of the exchange, in the American colonies, the import tax of 3d per lb was to be retained. The Tea Act went one step further; it permitted the company to sell its tea directly to chosen agents, or rather consignees, in the colonies. Prior to that time certain goods, including tea, was required to be sold at public auction. With the passage of the Tea Act, the East India Company could undersell even the colonial smugglers. In September, the company prepared to send nearly a half of a million pounds of the tea to consignees it had carefully chosen in the colonial cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. Those carefully chosen consignees included two sons and a nephew of Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts.

The American colonists were, understandably, upset with the Tea Act because of the fact that the import tax was still retained while the export tax was waived. It must be remembered that when any emigrant arrived to the shores of the American colonies, they were required to swear an oath of allegiance and fidelity to the King of Great Britain. If they refused to do so, they were denied entry and were transported back to their country of origin. Therefore, although not all of the people in the American colonies were natural born in the British Isles, they were obliged to become British subjects and to pledge their loyalty to that king and government. The main argument that the colonists had with the mother country was that, as British citizens, they should be entitled to the same rights and privileges as all other British citizens.

The selective nature of the Tea Act infuriated the colonists who had just, a few years previously, experienced the restrictive and discriminatory measures of the Stamp and Townshend Acts. Going hand in hand with the problem that the colonists' perception of discrimination was the fact that the Tea Act was primarily a means to relieve the financial problems of a business by creating a monopoly for it. Whether it was right or wrong, the smuggling activities, (or more gently stated,

the privateering activities) of the New England merchants was helping their colonies to survive. The Tea Act, which virtually placed the price of tea, a commodity in high demand, in the hands of the East India Company, threatened to destroy the economy of the northern colonies. Neither the shareholders of the East India Company nor the Parliament were long-sighted enough to realize that if they destroyed the economy of the colonies, their own economic system might be in danger. The colonies provided a major market for British goods, not necessarily because they were coerced into that market, but because of the continually increasing population in the new world colonies. The City of Philadelphia, alone, had a population of nearly 30,000 as the 1770s began. That was nearly double what it had been just a decade previous.

The East India Company engaged several ships to transport the tea to the ports of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. The reaction of the colonists at those locations varied, but they all agreed that the tea should not be allowed to be landed. The history of this situation, as taught in public schools, tends to revolve around the incident at Boston which would forever be known as the Boston Tea Party. One would come to believe that the tea was delivered only to that city. What most people do not know is that the first group to react strongly against the circumstances being thrust upon them were the Philadelphians. They met in a town meeting on 16 October, 1773 to discuss the Tea Act. The outcome of their meeting was that they condemned the Act and called for the resignation of the consignees from their agreements with the East India Company. Having agreed to cooperate with the citizens' request, the consignees refused to accept the shipment. In the month of December, 1773 two brigs carrying their cargo of tea came sailing up the Delaware. They got no further than Gloucester Point when they were ordered to halt and anchor. The captain of the ship, *Polly*, was invited to disembark and accompany a party into the city so that he could better make the decision if his ship should attempt to proceed further, or if it should return to England. Nearly eight thousand Philadelphians were congregated in the State House yard to greet him with their opinion. Needless to say, the *Polly's* captain made the decision to weigh anchor and head back across the ocean. The other ship decided to follow the *Polly's* example and left also.

The people of Boston received word of the Philadelphia resolves against the Act and held their own town meeting during the first week of November. A hand-bill was distributed which announced the following:

"To the Freemen of this and the neighboring Towns. Gentlemen - You are desired to meet at the Liberty Tree this day at twelve o'clock at noon, then and there to hear the persons to whom the TEA shipped by the East India Company is consigned, make a public resignation of their offices as consignees, upon oath; and to swear that they will re-ship any teas that may be consigned to them by the said company, by the first vessel sailing to London."
Boston, November 3, 1773.

O.C., Sec'y.

At that meeting, they likewise agreed with the way that their neighbors to the south had decided to handle the situation by calling for the consignees to resign their commissions. The only problem was that when they called for that city's consignees to resign, they would not agree to do so. The citizens of Boston spent a few weeks deciding what they should do next.

In the meantime, the people of New York City endorsed and issued a broadside on 10 November which warned the harbor pilots not to guide and assist any ship laden with tea into the port. The Sons of Liberty issued their own edict on 29 November that branded any and all tea importers as enemies of America. They promised also to stage a boycott of tea should that become necessary. The result was that the New York consignees acquiesced to their demands and resigned from their commissions. A short time later Captain Lockyer arrived with his ship, the *Nancy*. As soon as it reached Sandy Hook a harbor pilot met with the captain and escorted him from his ship to the town, where he was met by a delegation of townspeople much like the Philadelphia reception. He also agreed that the most sensible course of action was to return to England without unloading his cargo. But at about the same time a merchant vessel commanded by Captain Chambers arrived in the port with eighteen chests of tea hidden among the other cargo. A search of the vessel by the Sons of Liberty revealed the hidden tea. They dumped the tea overboard, albeit without the clamor and fanfare that would take place at Boston. And Captains Lockyer and Chambers returned to England as soon as possible.

On the second day of December the ship, *London*, arrived in the harbor of Charleston. The people of the town met during the next day and resolved that the tea could be landed but that a general boycott should be placed upon the sale of it. After a 20-day wait the customs officials

allowed the tea to be unloaded and then had it stored in a wharf warehouse. The townspeople did not make any move against the action. There it lay and rotted, not a single pence having been paid for it. One source claims that the tea did not rot, but rather that it was confiscated by the Patriots after the war started and that it was auctioned to raise funds for the Patriot cause in July of 1776. Either way, the East India Company received no payment for the cargo.

Back in Boston, on the 18th of November a second town meeting was held, at which a committee was appointed to again attempt to convince that town's consignees to refuse to accept the tea that was soon expected. The reply was an even more emphatic "no". In response, a mob attacked the house of one of the consignees, Richard Clarke. A pistol was fired by either Clarke or one of his sons from an upstairs window into the crowd, and they replied to that by breaking all of the house's windows. The consignees' next move was to petition the governor to take the commissions out of their hands and transfer them to the Council so that any action taken by the citizens of the city would be interpreted as an action against the colony. The Council refused to be drawn into the affair.

On 29 November, 1773 Captain Hall brought the *Dartmouth* into the harbor. Receiving word of the ship's arrival, a large crowd of Bostonians began to gather at Faneuil Hall. It being too small to accommodate the size of the crowd, the meeting was moved to the Old South Meeting-house. There the citizens resolved that the tea would not be landed and that the ship should be moored under a guard of twenty-five men. The consignees of the tea sent a letter to the meeting asking that the tea be taken off the ship and stored until they could write to England for instructions on how they should proceed. This was rejected by the people. With their business taken care of for the time being, the crowd dispersed. In a few days two more ships, the *Beaver* and the *Eleanor*, under the commands of Captains Hezekiah Coffin and James Bruce, arrived in the harbor; they were moored at Griffin's Wharf along with the *Dartmouth*.

Nothing was done by the citizens of Boston over the next two or three weeks, but likewise nothing was done by the masters of the ships and the governor as they both waited and watched the other. On the 14th of December another meeting was called in which the people resolved to order Mr. Roch, the owner of the *Dartmouth*, to apply for clearance and take his ship back to England. The *Dartmouth*, though, could go nowhere even if Mr. Roch had agreed to the people's resolve; Governor Hutchinson had, by that time, ordered Admiral Montague to take two armed vessels out to the mouth of the harbor. Montague was charged with the instructions not to allow any vessel to leave the harbor without the written permission of the governor himself; this would include the *Dartmouth*.

On the 16th of December, 1773 another meeting was held in the Old South Meeting-house in which Josiah Quincy roused the people with a passionate speech. He exhorted them to maintain their resolve not to allow the ships to land their cargo. While the meeting was being conducted, Mr. Roch had traveled to visit the governor at his country house in the village of Milton to request the required permission to leave the harbor. This the governor refused to grant, and Mr. Roch returned to the assembly in the late afternoon to inform the people of his failure in the mission. At about that time, a man disguised as a Mohawk Indian raised a war-whoop and was answered by many others. They seemed to know what should be done next without having to voice it; perhaps, it has been conjectured, a group had made prior plans outside of the knowledge of the general citizenry. In any case, the crowd moved out into the Boston streets in the growing twilight of the early evening to watch as a group of between fifteen and twenty men made their way by torchlight to Griffin's Wharf. This small group disguised as Indians, and apparently led by Lendell Pitts, were joined by others who realized that all the talking and waiting was about to come to a head. About sixty men boarded the *Dartmouth* and the other two vessels and proceeded to open the hatches to the cargo holds. The chests of tea were brought up onto the decks and then smashed open. The tea was then strewn onto the surface of the water. It is estimated that nearly one hundred and forty individuals eventually participated in the event. The *Beaver* and the *Eleanor* were then boarded and her cargo of tea only likewise destroyed and cast into the harbor water. Within two hours, three hundred and forty-two chests were destroyed.

Although the British troops were near enough to Griffin's Wharf to intercede, and the action took place at a somewhat early hour with a little of natural daylight remaining, they did not make any move. There was no auxiliary rioting or trouble from the people. They were content that the object of their anger ~ the tea ~ had been taken care of, and that the East India Company would receive no tax money from them. It is to their credit also that they can be remembered for not having damaged any of the other cargo carried by the ships.

The last, and least known incidents occasioned by the Tea Act took place in 1774, but should be

noted here for the sake of continuity. A few other cargoes of the surplus tea maintained by the East India Company were sent to American ports in attempts by the East India Company to "test the waters" again, so to speak.

On 22 April, 1774 a load of tea was delivered to New York City. The tea was dumped into the harbor as at Boston.

The *Peggy Stewart* sailed for Annapolis and arrived at that port on 14 October, 1774. The ship was set afire in the harbor and was destroyed along with the tea it was carrying.

The *Greyhound*, bound for Philadelphia, arrived in November and was landed at Greenwich on the Jersey shore. The cargo was placed secretly in the cellar of a house near the market. The people were not duped so easily by the passage of time; on the evening of November 22 a group of fifty men disguised as Indians broke into the building and took the chests into a nearby field. They were piled up and set afire. This final, defiant action by the colonists apparently convinced the shareholders of the East India Company to keep their hated tea on British shores.

1774

Parliament was not amused in any way by the *tea parties* that took place in the colonies. In the session held on the 7th of March, Lord Chatham and Edmund Burke attempted to persuade the members to refuse to endorse a collection of "*Coercive*" measures which the king had proposed. Known commonly as the *Coercive Acts*, these measures included bills intended to punish Boston. Despite the fact that other port cities had responded antagonistically to the Tea Act, the king wanted to punish Boston for its long history of obstinacy and use her as an example to the other cities and colonies.

The first of the Coercive Acts was the Boston Port Bill. The intent of this bill was to bring the city to a state of near-starvation so that the citizens would show more respect toward the mother country. This bill, passed on 31 March, 1774 prohibited the loading or unloading of any ships in Boston Harbor except for military and food shipments cleared by the king's customs officials.

On 20 May the Administration of Justice Act was passed. This bill safeguarded the officials in the colony of Massachusetts against hostile colonial courts. This bill also stated that a crown official could transfer a trial to Britain if he felt it was necessary. This bill was designed to prevent the colonists from getting a trial by a jury of their own peers.

The Massachusetts Government Act was also passed on 20 May, 1774. This bill brought about an annulment of the Massachusetts Charter. The members of the Massachusetts Council would thereafter be chosen and appointed (and likewise removed from office) by the king himself. In a bold move to nip the revolutionist spirit in the bud, the bill also prohibited the assembly of the people in town meetings without the prior written consent of the governor.

The Quartering Act was designed to apply to all of the colonies. Up to this time, the quartering of troops was generally confined to taverns and deserted buildings. The Quartering Act, passed on 2 June, 1774, informed that colonists that the troops would now be quartered in their dwellings along with their families. This would make it quite difficult for the colonists to carry on their secretive discussions and planning of subversive activities, such as the Boston Tea Party.

The last of the *Coercive Acts* did not apply directly to the colonies. In fact, it was not intended to be included with the other bills, but because it affected the colonies indirectly, they objected to it also. The Quebec Act was passed on 20 May, 1774 to provide a stable form of civil government to New England's estranged sister colony to the north. This, in and of itself was not objectionable. What the colonists objected to was the new southern boundary established by the bill for the Canadian province. The Ohio Valley was claimed by various of the colonies, including Virginia, Connecticut and Massachusetts. The Quebec Act ignored the charters granted to those colonies and established the Ohio River as the southern boundary of Canada.

Following Parliament's passage of the Boston Port Bill, an appeal was sent out by Boston's citizens requesting that the other colonies accompany her in placing economic sanctions against Britain in the form of the nonimportation of any British goods. The other colonies were not prepared to take such a drastic step, but most of them agreed that an intercolonial meeting, or congress, should be held to discuss what course of action they should take. Boston was undeterred in her decision to boycott British goods. The Committee of Correspondence of that city signed into effect the Solemn League and Covenant on 5 June, 1774. This document was an agreement among its subscribers to put an end to all business with Britain and to refuse British imports effective October 1st.

In response to the call for a congress, Providence let it be known as early as 17 May, 1774 that she was in favor of such. Philadelphia responded in the affirmative on 21 May; she was followed two days later by New York City. The other colonies followed suit and they proceeded to name delegates to attend the proposed congress. Between 15 July and 25 August the delegates were named and the congress was arranged to be conducted in Philadelphia in September. Only Georgia failed to obtain the assent of a majority of her representatives; no delegates would attend in her behalf.

The First Continental Congress was convened on 5 September, 1774 in the Carpenters Hall in the largest city in America at the time: Philadelphia. Fifty-six delegates from twelve of the thirteen colonies attended this first conference for the purpose of determining if they could work together in unity. Two months earlier, on 13–15 July, 1774, deputies chosen within the several counties of the Province of Pennsylvania met in Philadelphia to compose the *Resolves Of The Committee For The Province With The Instructions To Their Representatives In Assembly* and to choose the Pennsylvania delegates to attend the First Continental Congress. The seven individuals chosen included: Edward Biddle, Joseph Galloway, Charles Humphreys, Thomas Mifflin, John Morton, Samuel Rhoads, and George Ross.

The First Continental Congress was in session between 5 September and 26 October, 1774. The spacious and comfortable rooms of the Pennsylvania Assembly were offered to the Congress for its use as the meeting place. But instead, the library on the second floor of Carpenters' Hall was chosen. The reason for this change was simple: Pennsylvanian delegate Joseph Galloway was the Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly and he was known to be a staunch conservative in that Assembly. To hold the Congress in the Pennsylvania Assembly rooms would have given Galloway an unfair and advantageous sense of security. The "home team" always feels such an advantage and sometimes makes use of it to sway the opposing forces. Apart from the decision of where the Congress would be conducted, minor decisions of protocol had to be determined and agreed upon. The decision was made by the delegates in attendance that, due to the uneven numbers of delegates from each county, it would be fair for each province to have a single vote. It was also agreed that the business of the Congress should not be publicized until the Congress had completed its work and was ready to officially publish its resolves.

The Congress proceeded with their business and was in session during the second week in September when a report was received that Boston had just then been fired upon by British warships. That report was soon proven false, but on 16 September Paul Revere rode into the city and delivered a copy of the Suffolk Resolves to the Congress. The Suffolk Resolves had been drawn up and accepted by a congress held on 9 September in the county of Suffolk in Massachusetts. These resolves included four main points. The Coercive Acts were declared unconstitutional according to prior Parliamentary agreements. Therefore they should not be obeyed. The people of Massachusetts were encouraged by the second point to form a government of their own to collect taxes and withhold them from the crown officials until after the Coercive Acts were repealed by Parliament. The third point urged the citizenry to form a militia organization and to secure arms and ammunition with which to defend themselves if necessary. The fourth point called for economic sanctions against the British Isles. The radicals among the delegates immediately set to work in convincing the Congress to endorse and support the Suffolk Resolves. They succeeded in their goal and the Congress, by majority vote, on 17 September, 1774 did so endorse the actions of her northern colony.

The conservative delegates did not so readily accept their minor defeat on the issue of the endorsement of the Suffolk Resolves. On 22 September, 1774, Joseph Galloway presented an alternative plan, titled the *Plan Of A Proposed Union Between Great Britain And The Colonies*. The conservatives united in an attempt to have "Galloway's Plan Of Union" passed. This plan called for King George II and his Parliament to continue to regulate the "*general affairs of America*", but that the colonies would regulate and govern their own internal affairs. Under Galloway's plan, the king would appoint a President-General with the privilege to veto the acts of a Council, which would be appointed to three-year terms by the assemblies of each individual province. This President and Council would have the same standing as the other houses of Parliament. Unfortunately for the conservatives, but indeed fortunately for us, the descendants of those Patriots who spent almost a month in the stuffy library of Carpenters' Hall haggling over the fine points of the plan, Galloway's Plan Of Union was defeated by a vote of six to five on 22 October.

On the 14th of October the Congress adopted a document containing ten resolutions which set forth the rights of the colonies. This *Declaration and Resolves* denounced the Coercive Acts along with stating that the power to make and execute law within the colonies should be the right and

privilege of those colonies. This document also included, as one of its resolutions, the idea that every citizen of the colonies should have the right to "life, liberty and property" without interference by Britain.

The single most important decision to be made by the provincial delegates meeting in congress was the adoption of the Continental Association. The Association was primarily an agreement between the colonies that they would cease importation of British goods effective December 1st, which included anything from Britain's East and West Indies colonies; that effective on the same date, all slave trade would cease; that, effective 1 March, 1775, they would engage in the nonconsumption of any and all extravagances, such as horse-racing and elaborate funerals; and finally that they would not export anything of American manufacture to Great Britain or any of her other colonies, with the one exception of rice to Europe, effective 1 September, 1775. The Association also called for punishments of violators by notification of their violations in the common press along with a request that their services and goods be likewise boycotted. Any province which failed to uphold the agreements made by the Association would be boycotted also. In effect, the Association was a strict agreement by the colonies to work together as a unified body ~ one for all, and all for one. The Association was adopted by the Congress on 18 October, 1774.

Prior to its adjournment on 26 October, 1774, the First Continental Congress approved the drafting of two letters. The first was directed to Canada, requesting the Quebec Province to join the Americans in their stand of unity. The second letter, drafted by John Dickinson, was directed to King George the Third.

Bedford: In the first months of summer, 1774, the word went out to all of the counties in the Province of Pennsylvania that a meeting needed to be held to consider what Pennsylvania's reaction to the New England problems should be. The meeting, held in Philadelphia between 13 and 15 July, was attended by representatives from all of the counties and the City of Philadelphia. Bedford County's one delegate to this provincial meeting was, then, a resident of Bedford Township ~ George Woods.

George Woods was an early settler of Bedford County. He applied for a warrant for a tract of fifty acres on 3 June, 1762 on the north side of the Juniata River (in Cumberland Valley Township) "*including a bottom on which he now lives and upon Great Road*". George Woods was a surveyor by trade; in 1784 he laid out the town of Pittsburgh, where a street is named in his honor. George married Jane McDowell and they resided at first in present-day Juniata County. He was captured in 1756 by Delaware Indians, but was saved from death by Capt. Hudson of the Seneca tribe (who often visited the Woods family in later years). Woods was somewhat of a conservative in regard to American Independence. At first, he did not favor the separation of the colonies from the mother country, but by 1777 he had changed his mind and took the oath of allegiance to the Patriot cause. He served Bedford County as a member of her Committee of Correspondence. He also served as a Colonel of the Bedford County Militia and a Councillor for the county.

This chronological history of the Revolutionary War will be continued in a future newsletter.

3rd Quarterly Meeting Reminder

This is to remind you all that the 3rd Quarterly Meeting of the Blair County Chapter, SAR is scheduled for Saturday, July 9 at 12:00noon. Please note that this meeting will be held at the Waffle King Restaurant in Altoona.