



#1 1997

## A Chronology Of The Revolutionary War

*with emphasis on Bedford County, Pennsylvania's role*

### Continued

## 1775: The Olive Branch Petition

John Dickinson was one of the conservative delegates to the Continental Congress. He was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1732 in Maryland. He studied law and graduated from the Middle Temple law school in London, England. In 1757 he set up his practice in Philadelphia. He was an avid writer, both on a personal and public level, and because of that he was rather well known when the disagreement with the mother country first became evident. An active member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, in 1765 Dickinson attended the Stamp Act Congress (*see Newsletter #4 1993*) and was a great influence on its proceedings. Although he was not named a member of the committee to draft a petition, John Dickinson made fourteen suggestions which were formalized, with very few changes, in the *Declaration Of Rights And Grievances*. More well known to the public, though, were a series of twelve anonymous letters Dickinson sent to the *Philadelphia Chronicle* between 05 November, 1767 and January, 1768 under the title of *Letters From A Farmer in Pennsylvania To The Inhabitants Of The British Colonies*. The *Letters* recounted the hardships that "liberty" had in attempting to exist throughout England's history and which outlined the various dangers that (parliamentary) taxation without (colonial) representation posed for the inhabitants of the American colonies. When the First Continental Congress convened on 05 September, 1774 Dickinson was not in attendance as one of the delegates from Pennsylvania. But, on 15 October the Pennsylvania Assembly voted to appoint him as a delegate and he was admitted to the Congress on the 17<sup>th</sup>. From the beginning, Dickinson was regarded as a radical. The scope of his radicalism, though, did not include the employment of armed aggression. Dickinson argued that the American colonies could remain in the British empire if they could convince King George to redress the grievances that had cropped up since the early 1760s. John Dickinson's belief that armed conflict could be averted led his fellow delegates to label him a conservative.

The delegates assembled in Congress were not all hot-headed activists as our history books might lead us to think. The *Journals Of The Continental Congress* refer to numerous instances in which the delegates resolved themselves into a "committee of the whole to take into their farther consideration the state of America", during which they discussed the actions they should take in regard to some recent news. These discussions would result in a series of resolutions which the Congress would then publish to the inhabitants of the colonies or to King George and his Parliament. In addition to resolutions for calling out the militia or taking some similar defensive action, a



statement expressing the hope that the differences between the mother country and her colonies might be resolved often was included. As the conflict unfolded in the colony of Massachusetts~Bay the inhabitants of New York City began to fear that they would be the next target of British aggression. In early May, 1775 a letter from the inhabitants of New York asked the delegates assembled in Congress to consider their situation and make suggestions on how they should conduct themselves in the event that the British landed in that province. A set of resolutions were agreed upon during the sessions held on 25 and 26 May. Along with resolutions including (#5) "*That the militia of New York be armed and trained and in constant readiness to act at a moments warning...*", the Congress resolved that (#6) "*it be recommended to the congress afores<sup>d</sup> (i.e. the Provincial Congress of New York) to persevere the more vigourously in preparing for their defence, as it is very uncertain whether the earnest endeavors of the Congress to accomodate the unhappy differences between G. Britain and the colonies by conciliatory Measures will be successful.*" Resolution #3 stated that:

*"But, as we most ardently wish for a reformation of the harmony formerly subsisting between our Mother country and these colonies, the interruption of which must, at all events, be exceedingly injurious to both countries, Resolved, that with a sincere design of contributing by all the means in our power, not incompatible with a just regard for the undoubted rights and true interests of these colonies, to the promotion of this most desirable reconciliation, an humble and dutiful petition be presented to his Majesty."*

On 03 June, 1775 a motion was discussed and passed which resolved "*that a committee of five be appointed to draught a petition to the King.*" Other committees were appointed to draft letters to the inhabitants of Great Britain, Ireland and Jamaica. The committee appointed to draft a petition to the King consisted of Thomas Johnson, John Rutledge, John Jay, Benjamin Franklin and John Dickinson. By the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, reports were arriving concerning the escalating hostilities that were taking place around Boston. The petition to the King would be preempted by more pressing concerns, including the establishment of an army.

On 06 July, 1775 the Congress resumed consideration of the address to the inhabitants of Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson were added to the original committee which consisted of John Rutledge, William Livingston, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Thomas Johnson after the first draft they had prepared and presented for review on 24 June was not deemed satisfactory. The writing of the draft was recommitted to Jefferson. According to Dickinson, Jefferson's draft was too harsh. Dickinson was given the privilege to make changes to Jefferson's draft and it was his *Declaration On Taking Arms* which was presented by the committee to the Congress for approval on 06 July.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July the Congress heard John Dickinson's letter to the King and, according to Thomas Jefferson, "*gave a signal proof of their indulgence to Mr. Dickinson, and of their great desire not to go too fast for any respectable part of our body, in permitting him to draw their second petition to the king according to his own ideas, and passing it with scarcely any amendment.*" That letter, which would come to be called *The Olive Branch Petition*, read as follows:

*To the king's most excellent Majesty:*

*MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,*

*We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the colonies of new Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves, and the inhabitants of these colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in general Congresses, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.*

*The union between our Mother country and these colonies, and the energy of mild and just government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder*



and envy of other Nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals, observing that there was no probability of this happy connexion being broken by civil dissensions, and apprehending its future effects, if left any longer undisturbed, resolved to prevent her receiving such continual and formidable accessions of wealth and strength, by checking the growth of these settlements from which they were to be derived.

In the prosecution of this attempt, events so unfavourable to the design took place, that every friend to the interests of Great Britain and these colonies, entertained pleasing and reasonable expectations of seeing an additional force and extension immediately given to the operations of the union hitherto experienced, by an enlargement of the dominions of the Crown, and the removal of ancient and warlike enemies to a greater distance.

At the conclusion, therefore, of the late war, the most glorious and advantageous that ever had been carried on by British arms, your loyal colonists having contributed to its success, by such repeated and strenuous exertions, as frequently procured them the distinguished approbation of your Majesty, of the late king, and of parliament, doubted not but that they should be permitted, with the rest of the empire, to share in the blessings of peace, and the emoluments of victory and conquest. While these recent and honorable acknowledgments of their merits remained on record in the journals and acts of that august legislature, the Parliament, undaunted by the imputation or even the suspicion of any offence, they were alarmed by a new system of statutes and regulations adopted for the administration of the colonies, that filled their minds with the most painful fears and jealousies; and, to their inexpressible astonishment, perceived the dangers of a foreign quarrel quickly succeeded by domestic dangers, in their judgment, of a more dreadful kind.

Nor were their anxieties alleviated by any tendency in this system to promote the welfare of the Mother country. For tho' its effects were more immediately felt by them, yet its influence appeared to be injurious to the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain.

We shall decline the ungrateful task of describing the irksome variety of artifices, practiced by many of your Majesty's Ministers, the delusive preferences, fruitless terrors, and unavailing severities, that have, from time to time, been dealt out by them, in their attempts to execute this impolitic plan, or of tracing, thro' a series of years past, the progress of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and these colonies, which have flowed from this fatal source.

Your Majesty's Ministers, persevering in their measures, and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have compelled us to arm in our own defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affections of your still faithful colonists, that when we consider whom we must oppose in this contest, and if it continues, what may be the consequences, our own particular misfortunes are accounted by us only as parts of our distresses.

Knowing to what violent resentments and incurable animosities, civil discords are apt to exasperate and inflame the contending parties, we think ourselves required by indispensable obligations to Almighty God, to your Majesty, to our fellow subjects, and to ourselves, immediately to use all the means in our power, not incompatible with our safety, for stopping the further effusion of blood, and for averting the impending calamities that threaten the British Empire.

Thus called upon to address your Majesty on affairs of such moment to America, and probably to all your dominions, we are earnestly desirous of performing this office, with the utmost deference for your Majesty; and we therefore pray, that your royal magnanimity and benevolence may make the most favourable construction of our expressions on so uncommon an occasion. Could we represent in their full force, the sentiments that agitate the minds of us your dutiful subjects, we are persuaded your Majesty would ascribe any seeming deviation from reverence in our language, and even in our conduct, not to any reprehensible intention, but to the impossibility of reconciling the usual appear~



ances of respect, with a just attention to our own preservation against those artful and cruel enemies, who abuse your royal confidence and authority, for the purpose of effecting our destruction.

Attached to your Majesty's person, family, and government, with all devotion that principle and affection can inspire, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these colonies may be restored, but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis as to perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any future dissensions, to succeeding generations in both countries, and to transmit your Majesty's Name to posterity, adorned with that signal and lasting glory, that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and, by securing happiness to others, have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame.

We beg leave further to assure your Majesty, that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists, during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin, to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honor and duty, as well as inclination, induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable grief, being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been, with their lives and fortunes, to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty, and of our Mother country.

We, therefore, beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us relief from our afflicting fears and jealousies, occasioned by the system before mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of your dominions, with all humility submitting to your Majesty's wise consideration whether it may not be expedient for facilitating those important purposes, that your Majesty be pleased to direct some mode, by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne, in pursuance of their common councils, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation; and that, in the mean time, measures may be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your Majesty's subjects; and that such statutes as more immediately distress any of your Majesty's colonies may be repealed.

For by such arrangements as your Majesty's wisdom can form, for collecting the united sense of your American people, we are convinced your Majesty would receive such satisfactory proofs of the disposition of the colonists towards their sovereign and parent state, that the wished for opportunity would soon be restored to them, of evincing the sincerity of their professions, by every testimony of devotion becoming the most dutiful subjects, and the most affectionate colonists.

That your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign, and that your descendants may govern your dominions with honor to themselves and happiness to their subjects, is our sincere and fervent prayer.

The Petition was not unanimously endorsed by the delegates to the Congress. John Adams, for one, had argued against it in the discussions of the Congress. Adams believed that the sending of the Petition to the king would imply that the colonies were weak and not as "united" as they claimed to be. In his diary, John Adams wrote:

"I took my hat, and went out of the door of Congress Hall. Mr. Dickinson observed me and darted out after me. He broke upon me in a most abrupt and extraordinary manner: in as violent a passion as he was capable of feeling, and



with an air, countenance and gestures as rough and haughty as if I had been a school-boy and he the master. He vociferated, 'What is the reason, Mr. Adams, that you New England men oppose our measures of reconciliation? There, now, is Sullivan, in a long harangue, following you in a determined opposition to our petition to the King. Look ye! if you don't concur with us in our pacific system, I and a number of us will break off from you and New England, and we will carry on the opposition by ourselves in our own way.' I own I was shocked with this magisterial salutation...

The more I reflected on Mr. Dickinson's rude lecture in the State House yard, the more I was vexed with it; and the determination of Congress in favor of the petition did not allay the irritation... I took my pen and wrote a very few lines to my wife, and about an equal number to General James Warren."

The letter Adams wrote to James Warren was intercepted by the British and published. In that letter he described Mr. Dickinson as a "*piddling genius whose fame has been trumpeted so loudly*" Dickinson had, according to Adams, "*given a silly cast to our whole doings.*" He noted that the time spent on the Petition should have been spent in preparing for war. "*We ought to have had in our hands a month ago the whole legislative, executive and judicial of the whole continent, and have completely modelled a constitution; to have raised a naval power and opened all our ports wide; to have arrested every friend of government on the continent and held them as hostages for the poor victims in Boston...*" Then, and only then, should there have been any petitioning according to Adams.

The Olive Branch Petition was entrusted to Richard Henry Lee and Richard Penn to be taken to England and presented to the king. Penn left America on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July with the petition and arrived in London on 14 August. He was deliver the petition to Lord Dartmouth, who in turn would deliver it to the king. For some reason the petition was not delivered to Dartmouth until the 26<sup>th</sup> and when he attempted to deliver it to the king, George III refused to accept it. Lord Suffolk responded by stating that "*The King and his Cabinet are determined to listen to nothing from the illegal congress, to treat with the colonies only one by one, and in no event to recognize them in any form of association.*"

There was a great chance that a reconciliation with the mother country might have been effected if the petition had been read and taken into consideration by the king. Sentiment for reconciliation began to spread in the colonies shortly after it was issued. But King George III not only rejected the Olive Branch Petition; on 23 August, 1775 he issued a statement in which he proclaimed the Americans in a state of rebellion:

*Whereas many of our subjects in divers parts of our Colonies and Plantations in North America, misled by dangerous and ill defigning men, and forgetting the allegiance which they owe to the power that has protected and supported them; after various disorderly acts committed in disturbance of the publick peace, to the obftruction of lawful commerce, and to the opprefion of our loyal subjects carrying on the fame; have at length proceeded to open and avowed rebellion, by arraying themfelves in a hostile manner, to withftand the execution of the law, and traitoroufly preparing, ordering and levying war againft us: And whereas, there is reaſon to apprehend that ſuch rebellion hath been much promoted and encouraged by the traitorous correſpondence, counfels and comfort of divers wicked and deſperate perfons within this realm: To the end therefore, that none of our ſubjects may neglect or violate their duty through ignorance thereof, or through any doubt of the protection which the law will afford to their loyalty and zeal, we have thought fit, by and with the advice of our Privy Council, to iſſue our Royal Proclamation, hereby declaring, that not only all our Officers, civil and military, are obliged to exert their utmoſt endeavors to ſuppreſs ſuch rebellion, and to bring the traitors to juſtice, but that all our ſubjects of this Realm, and the dominions thereunto belonging, are bound by law to be aiding and aſſiſting in the ſuppreſſion of ſuch rebellion, and to diſcloſe and make known all traitorous conſpiracies and attempts againſt us, our crown and dignity; and we do accordingly ſtrictly*



*charge and command all our Officers, as well civil as military, and all others our obedient and loyal subjects, to use their utmost endeavors to withstand and suppress such rebellion, and to disclose and make known all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which they shall know to be against us, our crown and dignity; and for that purpose, that they transmit to one of our principal Secretaries of State, or other proper officer, due and full information of all persons who shall be found carrying on correspondence with, or in any manner or degree aiding or abetting the persons now in open arms and rebellion against our Government, within any of our Colonies and Plantations in North America, in order to bring to condign punishment the authors, perpetrators, and abettors of such traitorous designs.*

*Given at our Court at St. James's the twenty-third day of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, in the fifteenth year of our reign.  
God save the King*

The news of the rejection of the Olive Branch Petition was received by the delegates assembled in Congress on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1775. In the *Pennsylvania Packet* of 10 November, 1775 it was noted "His Lordship was pressed to obtain an answer, but those who presented it were told, 'That as his Majesty did not receive it on the throne, no answer would be given.'" Despite the response given to the petition by King George III, it was presented for consideration to the House of Commons on 07 November along with a motion that it constitute a basis for reconciliation. The motion was defeated by a vote of 83 to 33.

Certain delegates to the Continental Congress, including John Dickinson, were not content to be slapped across the face and dismissed so easily. A draft of a letter to the Agents (of the various Colonies) in England was read for approval during the November 29<sup>th</sup> session of Congress in which the statement was made that "There is nothing more ardently desired by North America than a lasting union with Great Britain on terms of just and equal liberty..." One last effort was made to express to the king that it was not he, but rather the Parliament of Great Britain, with whom any quarrel existed. A decision had been made and a resolution passed on 04 December that "in the present situation of affairs, it will be very dangerous to the liberties and welfare of America, if any Colony should separately petition the King or either house of Parliament." A committee was chosen to comment on the royal proclamations which had recently been announced. On 06 December the committee presented the following statement, which was approved for publication.

*We, the Delegates of the thirteen United Colonies in North America, have taken into our most serious consideration, a Proclamation issued from the Court of St. James's on the Twenty-Third day of August last. The name of Majesty is used to give it a sanction and influence; and, on that account, it becomes a matter of importance to wipe off, in the name of the people of these United Colonies, the aspersions which it is calculated to throw upon our cause; and to prevent, as far as possible, the undeserved punishments, which it is designed to prepare for our friends. We are accused of "forgetting the allegiance which we owe to the power that has protected and sustained us." Why all this ambiguity and obscurity in what ought to be so plain and obvious, as that he who runs may read it? What allegiance is it that we forget? Allegiance to Parliament? We never owed --we never owned it. Allegiance to our King? Our words have ever avowed it, --our conduct has ever been consistent with it. We condemn, and with arms in our hands, --a resource which Freemen will never part with, --we oppose the claim and exercise of unconstitutional powers, to which neither the Crown nor Parliament were ever entitled. By the British Constitution, our best inheritance, rights, as well as duties, descend upon us: We cannot violate the latter by defending the former: We should act in diametrical opposition to both, if we permitted the claims of the British Parliament to be established, and the measures pursued in consequence of those claims to be carried into execution among us. Our sagacious ancestors provided mounds against the inundation of tyranny and lawless power on one side, as well as against that of faction and licentiousness on the other. On which side has the breach been made? Is it*



objected against us by the most inveterate and the most uncandid of our enemies, that we have opposed any of the just prerogatives of the Crown, or any legal exertion of those prerogatives? Why then are we accused of forgetting our allegiance? We have performed our duty: We have resisted in those cases, in which the right to resist is stipulated as expressly on our part, as the right to govern is, in other cases, stipulated on the part of the Crown. The breach of allegiance is removed from our resistance as far as tyranny is removed from legal government. It is alleged, that "we have proceeded to an open and avowed rebellion." In what does this rebellion consist. It is thus described --"Arraying ourselves in hostile manner, to withstand the execution of the law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levying war against the King." We know of no laws binding upon us, but such as have been transmitted to us by our ancestors, and such as have been consented to by ourselves, or our representatives elected for that purpose. What laws, stamps with these characters, have we withstood? We have indeed defended them; and we will risk every thing, do every thing, and suffer every thing in their defence. To support our laws, and our liberties established by our laws, we have prepared, ordered, and levied war: But is this traitorously, or against the King? We view him as the Constitution represents him. That tells us he can do no wrong. The cruel and illegal attacks, which we oppose, have no foundation in the royal authority. We will not, on our part, lose the distinction between the King and his Ministers: happy would it have been for some former Princes, had it been always preserved on that part of the Crown.

Besides all this, we observe, on this part of the proclamation, that "rebellion" is a term undefined and unknown in the law; it might have been expected that a proclamation, which by the British constitution has no other operation than merely that of enforcing what is already law, would have had a known legal basis to have rested upon. A correspondence between the inhabitants of Great Britain and their brethren in America, produced, in better times, much satisfaction to individuals, and much advantage to the public. By what criterion shall one, who is unwilling to break off this correspondence, and is, at the same time, anxious not to expose himself to the dreadful consequences threatened in this proclamation --by what criterion shall he regulate his conduct? He is admonished not to carry on correspondence with the persons now in rebellion in the colonies. How shall he ascertain who are in rebellion, and who are not? He consults the law to learn the nature of the supposed crime: the law is silent upon the subject. This, in a country where it has been often said, and formerly with justice, that the government is by law, and not by men, might render him perfectly easy. But proclamations have been sometimes dangerous engines in the hands of those in power; information is commanded to be given to one of the Secretaries of State, of all persons "who shall be found carrying on correspondence with the persons in rebellion, in order to bring to condign punishment the authors, perpetrators, or abettors, of such dangerous designs." Let us suppose, for a moment, that some persons in the colonies are in rebellion, and that those who carry on correspondence with them, might learn by some rule, which Britons are bound to know, how to discriminate them; Does it follow that all correspondence with them deserves to be punished? It might have been intended to apprise them of their danger, and to reclaim them from their crimes. By what law does a correspondence with a criminal transfer or communicate his guilt? We know that those who aid and adhere to the King's enemies, and those who correspond with them in order to enable them to carry their designs into effect, are criminal in the eye of the law. But the law goes no farther. Can proclamations, according to the principles of reason and justice, and the constitution, go farther than the law?

But, perhaps the principles of reason and justice, and the constitution will not prevail: Experience suggests to us the doubt: If they should not, we must resort to arguments drawn from a very different source. We, therefore, in the name of the people of these United Colonies, and by authority, according to the



*pureft maxims of repreftation, derived from them, declare, that whatever punifhment fhall be inflicted upon any perfons in the power of our enemies for favouring, aiding, or abetting the caufe of American liberty, fhall be retaliated in the fame kind, and the fame degree upon thofe in our power, who have favoured, aided, or abetted, or fhall favour, aid, or abet the fyftem of minifterial oppreffion. The efsential difference between our caufe, and that of our enemies, might juftify a feverer punishment: The law of retaliation will unqueftionably warrant one equally fevere.*

*We mean not, however, by this declaration, to occafion or to multiply punifhments: Our fole view is to prevent them. In this unhappy and unnatural controverfy, in which Britons fight againft Britons, and the defcendants of Britons, let the calamities immediately incident to a civil war fuffice. We hope additions will not from wantonnefs be made to them on one fide: We fhall regret the necefsity, if laid under the necefsity, of making them on the other.*

The rift between the colonies and the mother country would become too wide for repair when, on 23 December, 1775 another royal proclamation was issued which would close all commerce to the colonies effective 01 March, 1776. Nothing, including the fluent prose of John Dickinson, could alter the course of events now.

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

## FORT FETTER

You might have read in the local newspapers during this past fall of the United States Postal Service's plans being developed to construct a distribution center on the property called "Strawberry Meadows" near the Wye Switches in Blair County's Blair Township. The tract of land chosen by the U.S. Postal Service lies to the north side of State Route 22 between properties occupied by the Olde Farm Office Complex and the John Stuckey Ford Sales. It lies along the south side of Beaverdam Run.

The property is (or should be) of interest to members of the Blair County Chapter, SAR because of its important link to the Revolutionary War era. For those of you who may not be sure of what I am referring to, please look back at Newsletter #1, 1993. It was from Fort Fetter, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1781, that a group of militiamen under the command of Captain John Boyd left to search out a band of Indians who had recently made an incursion into this region. The detachment of militia were ambushed only a few miles from the fort in an area to the south of the present-day village of Eldorado.

Shortly after I published 1993's Newsletter Issue #1, and while I was in the process of researching information on this region's Revolutionary War sites for my book, *The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Of Blair County*, Mary Brunner (a fellow historian with interest in the Indians of this region) introduced me to the book, *The Life Of Horatio Jones*, which had been republished in the Bulletin of the Buffalo Historical Society of Buffalo, New York. The biography of Horatio Jones is the closest thing to a first-hand account of the Engagement Of Frankstown available. Horatio Jones died on 18 September, 1836 at the age of seventy-two. In 1831 the Hon. B.F. Angel met Mr. Jones and subsequently married his daughter. Jones and Angel became intimate acquaintances during the former's last years and it was to Mr. Angel that the autobiography was told. Mr. Angel then conveyed the story to George Harris, who wrote the book. Although the account is not exactly first-hand, it still is the closest thing to it.

A very interesting and important piece of information was included in *The Life Of Horatio Jones*. Horatio Jones claimed that the Indian party, composed of Senecas from the Niagara region, was directed to this region by Lieutenant Robert Nelles, and was accompanied by a platoon of British soldiers. The British plan may have been to move into this south-central Pennsylvania region in order to disrupt transport of supplies and communication between Philadelphia and the east and Pittsburgh. It should be remembered that there was a known Tory presence already in this region and the British might have counted on support from such sympathizers.



The fact that the Engagement Of Frankstown never received national recognition should not detract from its importance to this region. If the fate of the British had not been decided as Yorktown, and if the war had continued, who knows what course it might have taken. The British continued to hold Chicago and Detroit long after the Treaty of Paris was signed. (Remember that the British presence and agitation in the vicinity of the Great Lakes was one of the reasons the War of 1812 was fought.) Throughout 1781 and a few years later, the Indian incursions into the frontier regions bordering on the Allegheny Mountain range were increased – the Indians' passions having been stirred up by the British. It should be noted that U.J. Jones, in his book, *The History Of The Early Settlement Of The Juniata Valley*, stated that the Indian party that massacred Captain Phillips' Rangers in the Woodcock Valley in July, 1780 had included two white men dressed as the Indians they accompanied. Not being informed of the source of U.J. Jones' information, we cannot be certain of either the validity of the statement or if the white men were local Tories or British. The expedition led by Lieutenant Nelles into Frankstown Township in 1781 may very well have been just a part of a larger British plan to shake up the peace occasioned by the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

In any case, the Engagement Of Frankstown on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1781 was this region's direct link to the British element of the Revolutionary War, and as such is important to the interests of the Blair County Chapter. Fort Fetter, having been a fortified structure which was used for the safe refuge of the local settlers and, during the summer of 1781, for the purpose of garrisoning the militia units who participated in the Engagement of Frankstown, likewise should be considered an important site to the chapter.

I felt that the Blair County Chapter should do something about the possible destruction and eventual obliteration of the site by the construction of the new postal distribution center. The subject was discussed at a recent chapter quarterly meeting and I was given the approval to contact the Bureau of Historical Preservation, Division of Archaeology & Protection. I accumulated a number of pieces of information, which I forwarded to the Bureau on 05 December. In the cover letter, I stated that: "I wish to make known the fact that the purpose of this request is not to halt the construction of the building on the site. The Blair County Chapter, SAR has no intention of reconstructing the fort, nor is it aware of any similar intention on the part of any other local/county historical society. This request is being made primarily to illicit the Bureau of Historic Preservation's attention to the possible destruction of a Revolutionary War era site, and to request that a survey be made of the site to determine if any remnants of the fortified structure and/or artifacts of the period still exist. The concern of the Blair County Chapter, SAR is that any remnants of the structure and/or artifacts, discovered during the excavation for the new structure, might not be forwarded to the appropriate historical society (whether on the county or the state level). Our intention, by making this request, therefore, is to ensure that any artifacts be preserved in a public collection and that any evidence of the structure itself be noted and recorded properly."

Included in the packet of information I sent to the Bureau were the following: 1.) a copy of the narrative, *The True Story Of Hoc-Sa-Go-Wah/ The Life Of Horatio Jones*, 2.) a copy of the letter from George Ashman to Joseph Reed dated 12 June, 1781 describing the incident, 3.) a copy of page 492 from the book, *Report Of The Commission To Locate The Site Of The Frontier Forts Of Pennsylvania, Volume I*, 4.) a copy of page 48 from the book, *History Of Huntingdon & Blair Counties, Pennsylvania*, and 5.) two photocopies of page 17 of the book, *Atlas Of Blair And Huntingdon Counties, Pennsylvania*, published in 1873 by A. Pomeroy & Co., marked with notations of where the fort possibly stood and where the roads currently lie.

In a letter dated 13 December, 1996 Mr. Kurt W. Carr, Chief of the Division of Archaeology and Protection, responded with the following information:

"Thank you for submitting the information on Fort Fetter. We have notified the developers that a Phase I archaeological survey is recommended. For your information, Act 70, passed earlier this year, now puts the responsibility of the archaeological survey on the Bureau for Historic Preservation instead of the permit applicant.

Unfortunately, we have very few resources with which to do this survey. Our office has compiled a list of sites like Fort Fetter (ones we are responsible for) and have ranked them. The highest ranked sites will be done first. Fort Fetter is very high on the list. I hope to keep you informed with the status of the site. Your help in this project is greatly appreciated."

I will keep the Blair County Chapter informed of any future correspondence in regard to this project. I would hope that, if anyone would have additional information/suggestions on this project, that you will share them with the Chapter either at a future quarterly meeting or by mail.



## 1997 Meeting Schedule ~ Blair County Chapter

January 18	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarterly Meeting	12:00 noon	Kings Family Restaurant
February 22	George Washington's Birthday (DAR)	12:00 noon	Ramada Altoona
April 12	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Meeting	12:00 noon	Kings Family Restaurant
July 5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Meeting	12:00 noon	Kings Family Restaurant
September 13	Constitution Day Dinner	12:00 noon	Kings Family Restaurant
October 25	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting	12:00 noon	Kings Family Restaurant
(to be announced)	Annual Meeting		(to be announced)

### 1997 Membership Dues Notice

All members but four have submitted their membership dues. In accordance with the PASSAR by-laws, the membership dues have a deadline of January 31, 1998 to be forwarded to the State Treasurer. That means that the Treasurer of the Blair County Chapter needs to receive the dues payments prior to that date (in order to be able to deposit them in the bank and then submit a check to the State Treasurer). If you have not yet paid your membership dues, please do so soon. Thank you very much to those of you have already paid.

### NOVA SCOTIA

It is interesting to consider the idea that the original *thirteen* colonies, which gained their independence from Great Britain in 1783, might have been the original *fourteen* colonies if the Continental Congress would have more seriously considered a petition from the inhabitants of the colony of Nova Scotia. On Thursday, 02 November, 1775 a petition was presented before the Congress in which it was stated that *"The Inhabitants of Passamaquaddy in Nova Scotia, having chosen a com(mitt)ee of Safety, and having, by their petition, applied to Congress to be admitted into the association of the North Americans, for the preservation of their rights and liberties."* A committee of five was appointed to consider the petition. The matter was brought up during the session held a week later, on 09 November, but was not resolved. It again was discussed on the 10<sup>th</sup>, at which time the decision was made to send two persons to Nova Scotia to *"enquire into the state of that colony, the disposition of the inhabitants towards the American cause, and the condition of the fortifications, Docks, yards, the quantity of artillery and warlike stores and the number of soldiers, sailors and ships of war there..."*

The subject of admitting Nova Scotia into the union of "North American" colonies was put off until the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 1776. The committee chairman, Benjamin Harrison, reported that there had not been sufficient time to review the petition of the colony of Nova Scotia. It was resolved that the Congress would form itself into a "committee of the whole" the following day to discuss the matter, but more pressing items arose and the petition of Nova Scotia was again set aside.

On 25 April, 1777 another petition for military aid was read before the Congress. That petition came from Robert Forster of the County of Cumberland in Nova Scotia. It was referred to the Board Of War for consideration. On 13 May, 1777 the Congress finally arrived at a resolution which stated that *"the council of the Massachusetts bay be requested to consider the case of the inhabitants of Cumberland and Sunbury counties in Nova Scotia, who are sufferers by their attachment to the American cause and to devise and put into execution at continental expence such measures as the said council shall think practicable and prudent for the relief of the said sufferers."* The Congress authorized assisting in removing any families from that colony to places of greater safety if they wished. The matter was eventually laid to rest on 21 May, 1778 when Congress resolved that *"the wresting of Nova Scotia from the British power and uniting the same to these States is... a very desirable object; but that the propriety of making this attempt at the present crisis seems doubtful; and upon the whole, it appears most wise to wait a while, until the event of a war taking place between France and Great Britain, and the consequences that (it) may have upon the British force on this continent, shall render an attempt upon Nova Scotia more likely to succeed."*

One can only wonder at why the Continental Congress did not act upon the petition by the colony of Nova Scotia sooner than it did ~ when it could have succeeded. Perhaps it was because only the county of Cumberland was really pro-American and the Congress may have foreseen too much Loyalist opposition. Nova Scotia remained British and became a haven for exiled American Loyalists.