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The Fincastle Resolutions*

Jim Glanville

Introduction

Despite their status as the most significant pre-Revolutionary political statement to emanate from Virginia's western frontier, the Fincastle Resolutions have never been the subject of the formal scholarly study which their status both for regional and Virginia history clearly warrants. The need for a formal work is apparent when we note that the most significant published document describing the resolutions is the text of a public address, lacking any footnotes or citations, made thirty-five years ago to celebrate the 200th anniversary of their adoption.¹ Local writers have tended to vastly over inflate the significance of the resolutions.²

The freeholders of Fincastle County³ met on 20 January 1775 in present-day Wythe County, Virginia. They elected a committee (called the county's "committee of safety" by Harwell⁴ and other authors) of fifteen men "in obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress." These fifteen men subscribed to Congress's resolves and undertook to see that they would be punctually executed. They then adopted a written address to "the Delegates from this Colony who attended the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia" and stated that their address was "unanimously agreed to by the people of the county." The address and its preamble, which were published twenty-two days after their adoption in Williamsburg in Purdie's *Virginia Gazette*,⁵ are reproduced in Appendix A.

Long tradition calls this publication the "Fincastle Resolutions," though it would be more accurately termed "The 1775 Address of the People of Fincastle to the Virginia Delegates to the Continental Congress." Long tradition likewise calls the fifteen members of the Fincastle County committee the "signers," a usage which is retained here for convenience

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and brevity. Lacking a hand-written copy of the Fincastle Resolutions, historians must rely entirely on the version published in the *Virginia Gazette*, which prints the names of the committee members. Thus, it is not definitely provable who, or indeed if anyone, signed on 20 January 1775, who perhaps signed later, or who consented to having his name published as a signer — without having actually been present on 20 January. However, at this time of intense and growing American self-awareness, men, especially men of the frontier, were certainly ready and eager to place their names on strongly worded documents as demonstrated here.

This article examines the resolutions themselves; the context in which they were written; the recent experiences of the signers; the resolves written two months earlier in November 1774 at Fort Gower (Appendix E) in the future Ohio; the resolutions written by the committees of three other frontier Virginia counties (Pittsylvania,⁶ Augusta, and Botetourt: appendices B, C, and D); the political and family connections that linked the signers to the tidewater Virginia establishment; and the “land-hunger”⁷ of contemporary Virginians of all social classes. The political opinions of the officers who fought in Dunmore’s War, as expressed in the Fort Gower Resolves, were well known to some of the signers of the Fincastle Resolutions, and probably to the committees of the counties of Pittsylvania, Augusta, and Botetourt.

An ever-present background theme to this article is that the collective drive among the signers to acquire western land, and the concomitant conflicts with Indians, deeply influenced the political views of the signers.⁸ A theme not developed here, because it was revealed only several years later, is that in contrast to the views of the most prominent signers, a significant fraction of the region’s population held strongly loyalist opinions.

On a minor though interesting matter, this article challenges the conventional wisdom that the Fincastle Resolutions were adopted at a meeting that took place at the Lead Mines. While we may never know for certain where they were adopted, an excellent circumstantial case can be made that their adoption occurred ten miles away at James McGavock’s ordinary (tavern and hostelry) at Fort Chiswell, Virginia.

Fincastle County December 1772 – December 1776

Fincastle County (Figure 1) existed as a Virginia political jurisdiction for just four years. On 1 December 1772 legislation split Botetourt County into two parts: a smaller Botetourt and a new county called Fincastle.⁹ Leg-

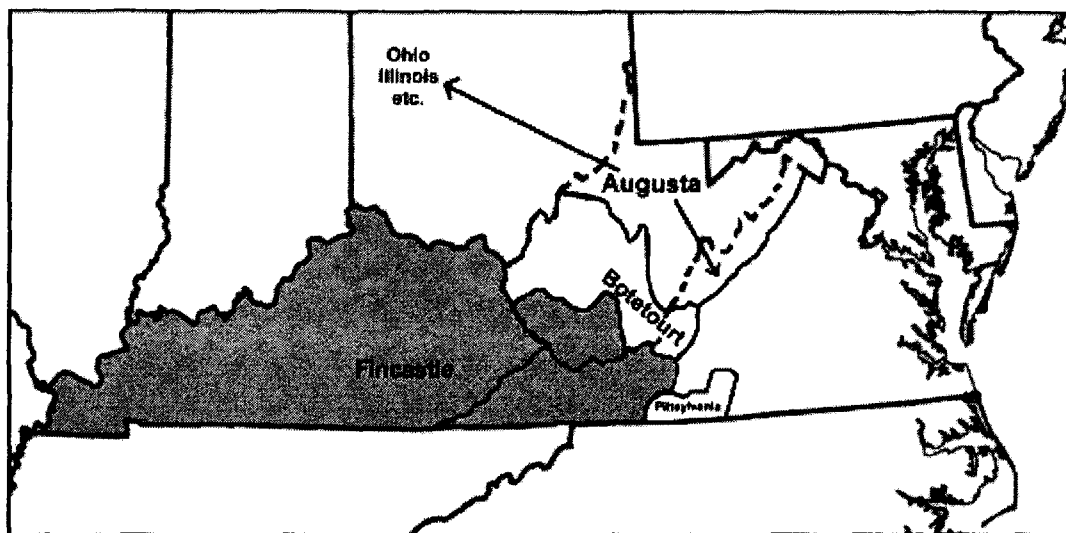


Figure I. A sketch of the western counties of the colony of Virginia in 1774–1775 superimposed on the boundary outlines of the present-day United States with part of the boundary of the future West Virginia shown dashed. Fincastle County is shown shaded. Fincastle County in 1774–1775 consisted of all of modern Kentucky, southern West Virginia, and western Virginia. Botetourt County consisted of three present-day Virginia counties and the present-day central counties of West Virginia. Augusta County consisted of a band of present-day counties along Virginia's present northwest border, the present-day northern counties of West Virginia, and the vast area of the Ohio and Illinois territories to the west.

isolation ended Fincastle County four years later on the last day of December 1776¹⁰ when it was divided into the counties of Kentucky (in the west), Montgomery (in the northeast), and Washington (in the southeast).

The county was perhaps named for Viscount Fincastle, one of the many titles of Virginia's then-governor, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, but other suggestions have been offered. The originally-formed Fincastle County was ultimately divided into all the counties of Kentucky, the counties of southern West Virginia, and the Virginia counties of Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Grayson, Buchanan, Russell, Washington, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee, and part of Craig.¹¹

The Virginia County Resolutions

In March 1774, at a time of growing unrest in the American colonies, the British parliament passed an Act closing the port of Boston. Other "Coercive Acts," aimed principally at Massachusetts, soon followed. On 13

May Bostonians met at Faneuil Hall, resolved to boycott all British goods, and called on the other colonies for support and assistance. Virginians were closely following events in Massachusetts through a Committee of Inter-colonial Correspondence established a year earlier.¹² On 24 May 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted a resolution naming 1 June, the day the port of Boston was to be closed, as a Virginia day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer.

Two days later Governor Dunmore dissolved the House of Burgesses. The following day, on 27 May, eighty-nine members of the just-dissolved House of Burgesses met at the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, formed an “Association” to defend “the constitutional rights and liberty of British America” and proposed an annual “general congress” of the colonies. They also formed a new non-importation association.¹³

Four days later, on 31 May, the newly-constituted Association issued a summons to all the members of the former House of Burgesses to attend a Virginia convention to be held on 1 August 1774 in Williamsburg. The summons noted an oncoming “alarming crisis” and said the convention would deal with matters of “lasting importance to all America.” This summons of delegates to the first Virginia Convention further noted: “We fixed this distant Day in Hopes of accommodating the Meeting to every Gentleman’s private affairs, and that they might, in the mean Time, have an Opportunity of collecting their sense of their respective Counties.”¹⁴ The call for collecting the sense of the counties was a significant democratic event that had not previously occurred in the colony of Virginia — men being invited to instruct their representatives — which set the stage for the later formation of county committees. The consequent county meetings were one-time events at which some men in each county typically adopted resolutions and prepared instructions for those they elected to send as delegates to the forthcoming convention. The meetings began a process by which at least fifty-nine of the sixty-five jurisdictions in Virginia adopted resolutions over the ensuing ten months.

The adoption of Virginia county resolutions occurred in two waves. The first wave was during the summer of 1774 at individually-called meetings prospective to the August Williamsburg convention. The second wave was during the fall and winter of 1774–1775 when county meetings not only made resolutions but had the additional purpose of forming committees — in response to the October 1774 call for such committees by the

First Continental Congress. Because the Fincastle men spent most of 1774 engaged in frontier Indian warfare, as described below, Fincastle County was among the latecomers in adopting resolutions.

These second-wave county committees were extremely important. Harwell remarks "...the formation of county committees to support American liberty and carry through the recommendations of the Continental Congress was the beginning of truly American self-government in an independent America."¹⁵ Further information about the Virginia meetings and committees of 1774 and early 1775 — in addition to Harwell's book and the primary documents in *Revolutionary Virginia* — can be found in the articles by Coleman,¹⁶ Bowman,¹⁷ and Hack.¹⁸ Soon after his return from his western war, Governor Dunmore demonstrated that he fully understood the future implications of the Virginia committees when he wrote on 24 December 1774 to Lord Dartmouth in England:

Every County, besides, is now arming a Company of men, whom they call an Independent Company, for the avowed purpose of protecting their Committees, and to be employed against Government, if occasion require. The Committee of one County [Spotsylvania] has proceeded so far as to swear the men of their Independent Company, to execute all orders which shall be given them from the Committee of their County.¹⁹

Actions of the Virginia Counties during the Summer of 1774

Though their objectives were the same, the counties that acted in the summer of 1774 did not act uniformly. All that held recorded meetings listed the men who were present, most issued resolves or a statement of resolve, most gave instructions to the men who would be their delegates to the August Convention in Williamsburg, and all sent a record of their actions to Williamsburg to be published in an issue of one of the Virginia Gazettes.²⁰ Table 1 lists the forty jurisdictions known to have acted during the first wave. The resolves and instructions of thirty-one of these were printed on the referenced pages in volume I of *Revolutionary Virginia*,²¹ and the records of nine (labeled <4 August 1774) have apparently been lost to history because publisher Clementina Rind lacked space to print them in her *Gazette*,²² as she reported on 4 August 1774.

The lengths of the documents published by the counties varied, as shown by the page counts listed in column 3 of Table 1. Thus, the Fairfax

Table I. Resolutions and Instructions Issued by County
and Corporate Freeholders and Others*
1 June - 4 August 1774

Jurisdiction(s)	Date of Meeting	Reference pages	Author(s)
Accomack	27 July 1774	111-112	No record
Albemarle	26 July 1774	112-113	Thomas Jefferson
Amelia	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Buckingham	28 July 1774	113-114	Not known
Caroline	14 July 1774	114-116	Not known
Chesterfield	14 July 1774	116-118	Not known
Culpeper	7 July 1774	118-120	Not known
Dinwiddie	15 July 1774	120-122	Not known
Dunmore	16 June 1774	122-123	Not known
Elizabeth City Co. & Hampton Town	25 July 1774	123-124	Not known
Essex	9 July 1774	125-127	Not known
Fairfax	18 July 1774	127-133	George Mason/ George Washington
Fauquier	9 July 1774	134-135	Not known
Frederick	8 June 1774	135-136	Not known
Fredericksburg Town	1 June 1774	137	Not known
Gloucester	14 July 1774	137-138	Not known
Hanover	20 July 1774	139-141	Not known
Henrico	15 July 1774	141-142	Not known
James City County	1 July 1774	143	Not known
King George	<4 August 1774	109	No record
King William	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Lancaster	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Lunenburg	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Mecklenburg	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Middlesex County	? July 1774	143-145	Not known
Nansemond County	11 July 1774	145-145	Not known
New Kent County	12 July 1774	147-149	Not known
Norfolk County and Borough	9 July 1774	149-150	Not known
Northumberland	<4 August 1774	109	No record

*Summarized from *Revolutionary Virginia*, volume I, pages 109-68.

The symbol "<" means "occurred prior to"

Table I. Resolutions and Instructions..., continued

Jurisdiction(s)	Date of Meeting	Reference pages	Author(s)
Orange	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Prince George County	? June 1774	150–152	Not known
Prince William Co. & Dumfries Town	6 June 1774	152–153	George Mason
Princess Anne County	27 June 1774	153–155	Not known
Richmond County	29 June 1774	155–157	Not known
Spotsylvania County	24 June 1774	158–159	Not known
Stafford County	? July 1774	159–162	Not known
Surry County	16 July 1774	162	Not known
Warwick	<4 August 1774	109	No record
Westmoreland County	22 June 1774	163–165	Richard Henry Lee
York County	18 July 1774	165–168	Not known

*Summarized from *Revolutionary Virginia*, volume I, pages 109–68.

The symbol “<” means “occurred prior to”

County Resolves, which represent one of the most extensive and radical specimens,²³ cover seven pages. The Fairfax Resolves asserted that Virginia could not be treated as a conquered country, demanded the application of the British constitution in Virginia, proclaimed that taxation and representation are inseparable, demanded that American grievances be redressed, and so on, concluding with the 26th resolve that all twenty-six resolves be sent to Williamsburg for publication. At the other end of the scale, the Fredericksburg actions were limited simply to concurring in “every proper measure” to support the rights and liberties of the town of Boston, appointing the committee’s members and clerk, and determining to keep a record of its proceedings.

Pledges to risk “our lives and fortunes” on behalf of King George were frequent (Buckingham, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Richmond, Surry, etc.), as were expressions of support for Boston (Accomack, Albemarle, Caroline, Culpeper, and many others). “Venal” or “evil” ministers in England were objected to (Dunmore and Essex, etc.). Acts of Parliament were condemned as “violating the most sacred and important rights of Americans” (Caroline), “repugnant” (Dunmore), “unjust, arbitrary, and unconstitutional” (Chesterfield), “tyrannical” (Essex), etc. Objection to taxation

without representation was a common theme (and explicitly Fairfax's sixth resolve). Many jurisdictions resolved not to import commodities (the non-importation policy) from Britain, with tea prominent among such items specifically mentioned. Almost all the jurisdictions concluded by electing delegates to the upcoming Virginia Convention and ordering that their resolves or actions be published.

Several jurisdictions concluded their meetings with hearty rounds of toasts to the King, his Queen, his family, reconciliation with Britain, sundry prominent personages, and, significantly, to American liberty. The freeholders of Westmoreland County managed twelve rounds of toasts, but were outdone by those of Princess Anne County, who stretched their toast making to sixteen rounds.

Sixty-five jurisdictions were represented in the House of Burgesses in 1774.²⁴ By August of that year, the records show that forty-one jurisdictions had definitely acted, four had probably acted, and among the remaining twenty others, some may have acted. Many of the men who played prominent roles during these summer 1774 meetings would subsequently become office-holders on their respective, later-formed county committees.

Taken collectively, the resolutions and instructions adopted by the jurisdictions during the summer of 1774 clearly reveal the hardening of Virginia opinion against British rule in the colony.

Actions of the Virginia Committees during the Winter of 1774–1775

The First Continental Congress formed an "Association" of all the colonies at its meeting in Philadelphia in October 1774 and recommended the election in each county and town of a committee to enforce the terms of the continental association. In November 1774, the formation of standing Virginia county committees began under the authority of, and following the recommendation of, that Congress.

The broad political situation in the winter of 1774–1775 was even more inimical to British rule than it had been in the summer of 1774. Subsequent to the actions of the forty jurisdictions listed in Table 1, the Continental Congress had acted, and Thomas Jefferson's influential pamphlet *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*,²⁵ which had been published in August, had become widely known in Virginia and elsewhere.

Table 2. Resolutions and Instructions Issued by County Freeholders
13 December 1774 – 27 March 1775*

Jurisdiction	Date of Meeting	Reference page(s)	Action taken
Amherst	<20 March 1775	336	Action presumed, delegates at convention
Augusta	22 Feb. 1775	298–300	Resolves: See Appendix C
Bedford	<20 March 1775	336	Action presumed, delegates at convention
Berkeley	<21 March 1775	336	Action presumed, delegates at convention
Botetourt	11 March 1775	324–325	Resolves: See Appendix D
Brunswick**	<25 March 1775	274–275	Tried a man for anti-Americanism
Charlotte	13 Jan. 1775	234	Only elected its committee
Cumberland**	10 March 1775	232	Encouraged manufactures
Fincastle	20 Jan. 1775	254–255	Resolves: See Appendix A
Goochland**	<11 Feb. 1775	285	Sold improperly imported goods
Hampshire	<27 March 1775	337	Action presumed, delegates at convention
Isle of Wight	13 Jan. 1775	235–236	Organized itself and planned meeting
King and Queen	9 Jan. 1775	227	Only organized itself
Louisa	<21 March 1775	337	Action presumed, delegates at convention
Northampton	13 Dec. 1774	243	Called for a committee to be organized
Pittsylvania	26 Jan. 1775	268–269	Organized and made resolves.
Southampton**	<9 March 1775	319–321	Committee met, action unknown
Sussex	<3 March 1775	311	Elected convention delegates
Williamsburg City	23 Dec. 1774	208	Only elected committee

* Summarized from *Revolutionary Virginia*, volume 2, pages 208–337.

** These four counties (and perhaps others listed above) had probably elected Committees during summer 1774, but evidence to that effect has not survived.

The symbol "<" means "occurred prior to."

Nineteen additional Virginia jurisdictions (Table 2) acted between 13 December 1774 (Northampton) and 27 March 1775 (Hampshire). The forty listed in Table 1, together with the nineteen listed in Table 2, make a total of fifty-nine of the colony's sixty-five jurisdictions that had acted. There is no surviving record of action by any of the remaining six. Chronologically, the Fincastle Resolutions ranked forty-sixth out of those fifty-nine. Collectively, with the sharp exception of Virginia's four western counties (Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle, and Pittsylvania), the second wave of actions of the county committees and their published resolutions were far less impressive than the first. The committees of the four western counties published by far the most significant statements in support of American liberty. Each of these counties acknowledged the work of the Continental Congress, demonstrating that they knew they were now acting under a national mandate rather than just under a Virginia mandate, as had been the case during the first wave of resolutions.

As noted above, at least four of the counties listed in Table 2 had probably elected committees during summer 1774, but no records of those events remain. On the record, Brunswick tried the merchant Alexander Love and acquitted him of violating the County Association; Cumberland sought to encourage manufactures; Goochland reported a sale of improperly imported goods; and Southampton County left a fifty-page record (of which the first thirty-eight are missing). All four of these counties were likely jurisdictions whose actions in the summer of 1774 were omitted from the *Virginia Gazette* for lack of space.²⁶

Six jurisdictions acted quite casually. Charlotte merely elected its committee. Isle of Wight County resolved to have a chairman and to have a meeting, but records of that meeting have not survived. King and Queen County simply elected a chairman, a substitute chairman, and a clerk but made no resolves. Northampton only called on the sheriff and "two other gentlemen" to become their committee but made no resolves. Southampton elected delegates and resolved to collect funds for "the suffering inhabitants of the town of Boston." Sussex solely elected delegates according to a report of a single line in the *Virginia Gazette*. Williamsburg City did no more than elect its committee.

Five counties (Amherst, Bedford, Berkeley, Hampshire, and Louisa) sent delegates to the second Virginia Convention (20–27 March 1775) but left no records of any meetings at which their delegates were selected.

The four westernmost counties took decisive steps. The first action among the four western counties came when the Fincastle committee adopted its resolutions on 20 January 1775 (see Appendix A). In the first line of its preamble the Fincastle committee told that it acted in “obedience” to the resolves of the Continental Congress, following the precedent that the Williamsburg committee had set a month earlier. After constituting itself, the committee wrote an “address” to the seven members of the Virginia delegation who had attended the Continental Congress, apologized to them for its lateness in acting due to Dunmore’s War (discussed below), and thanked them profusely for their services. The committee then asserted its love of King George III and, with an echo of Jefferson’s *Summary View*, spoke of the British “compact, law, and ancient charters.” After complaining that the “hand of unlimited and unconstitutional power” had come to the Virginia mountains through a “venal British parliament,” they resolved to live and die in defense of their “inestimable privileges.” The Fincastle Resolutions can be characterized as a high-minded appeal to principle and legal precedent; they are noteworthy for not proposing specific remedies and for failing to mention Boston.

The Pittsylvania (see Figure 1) committee met on 26 January 1775,²⁷ perhaps at a tavern in Callands,²⁸ and chose a committee of thirty-two men “agreeable to the direction of the General Congress.” After electing its chairman and clerk, the committee members determined to be resolute in defending their liberties and properties and, if required, to die on behalf of their “fellow sufferers,” the Bostonians. They next raised money for the General Congress, drank “patriotick toasts,” and ordered their proceedings published,²⁹ which they were on 11 February 1775 (see Appendix B).

The Augusta (see Figure 1) committee met on 22 February 1775³⁰ in Staunton. The account of its election of delegates and their instructions was published in Pinkney’s *Virginia Gazette* on 16 March 1775 (see Appendix C). Its words were forceful. The committee elected two delegates, who were instructed to “comply with the recommendations of the late continental congress.” The committee did not adopt formal resolves but, while expressing loyalty to King George and respect for the “parent state,” pledged its members’ “lives and fortunes” to preserve American rights in the face of ministers, parliaments, or “any body of men on earth” by whom they were not represented. The committee also “entirely” agreed with “the gentlemen of Fairfax county,” in a nod to the Fairfax Resolves of July 1774. Like that

of Fincastle, the Augusta committee did not mention Boston, although they did propose specific actions, including that the colonies should institute domestic production of commodities such as salt and steel.

The Botetourt³¹ (see Figure 1) committee published its instructions to its delegates in Hunter and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* on 11 March 1775³² (see Appendix D). They were brief and forceful. They called the King's ministers "a set of miscreants," who had "cruelly and tyrannically invaded our rights," and said that to "the honest man of Boston," the "hunter on the Allegany" must offer support with his gun, tomahawk, and life. The committee offered "ardent" acknowledgments to Virginia's delegation at the late Continental Congress and concluded that should the measures contemplated by the Congress fail, then the men of Botetourt would "stand prepared for every Contingency."

The actions of the Fincastle committee should not (as they almost always have been) be viewed in isolation. Rather, they should be examined in relation to the actions of the committees of Augusta, Botetourt, and Pittsylvania (and of the officers at Fort Gower in November 1774, as described below). All four of these western counties acted late in the Resolution-making process, principally because of the involvement of their leaders and people in Dunmore's War, and together produced by far the most significant documents of the second wave. Each of the statements adopted by these four counties pledged (in varying language) that the men who adopted them would give their lives in the cause of American liberty.

The View from Fincastle County in 1774

In 1774 the future signers of the Resolutions were living in a frontier society that was little more than five years old. About 1750, early pioneers such as Stephen Holstein and Samuel Stalnaker reached the Holston River watershed in present-day Smyth County, with the latter engaging in Indian trade on behalf of James Patton. In 1760–61, William Byrd III, succeeded in August 1761 by Adam Stephen, commanded an army that eventually reached more than 1,000 men. This army marched as far as the Long Island of the Holston (at future Kingsport, Tennessee) where, in November 1761, Stephen concluded a treaty with the Cherokees. The traverse of this army is only slightly treated in the popular historical literature; however, it has been well described by academic historians.³³ During the two decades between 1750 and 1770 settlers moved into and back out of the region as Indian conflict waxed and waned. Settlement began in earnest in Southwest

Virginia, northwestern North Carolina, and the Northeast of the future Tennessee by about 1770.³⁴

To briefly summarize the literature: Well-known traditional discussions of the 1774 view from Fincastle County include the books by Abernethy,³⁵ Sosin,³⁶ Tillson,³⁷ and Johnson,³⁸ along with articles by Isaac³⁹ and Crawford.⁴⁰ Major works of regional history that describe the early years during which Europeans entered the region include Summers,^{41,42} F. B. Kegley,⁴³ Johnson,⁴⁴ and, most recently, M. B. Kegley.⁴⁵ Useful is Woody Holton's book (by an author with roots in Southwest Virginia) about the various and complex motivations for revolutionary fervor in Virginia.⁴⁶ Also useful is Greene's analysis of the origins of the Revolution in Virginia.⁴⁷

The western Virginia frontier in 1774 was a complex social and political environment controlled by the two main forces of land-hunger and American Indian conflict — which were ineluctably entangled. The plight of the Bostonians and anger with British policies, except so far as they involved land, although readily acknowledged, were secondary issues for the frontiersmen in 1774. In addition to Indian conflict and institutionalized land acquisition, other issues on the frontier were individual land-grabbing and squatting, the local movement to set up independent governments, such as at Watauga,⁴⁸ competition for land grants among powerful groups, rivalry among the colonies for western land, English interests in western land, the oncoming Dunmore's War, and the incipient Tory movement. However, Tory sentiment in Southwest Virginia had not yet in 1774–1775 much manifested itself; it appeared quite strongly a few years later.⁴⁹

As an illustration of the dominance of conventional land acquisition in the minds of Fincastle frontiersmen, consider the work of William Preston's surveyors John Floyd, Hancock Taylor, and James Douglas, who were busy in April–June 1774 making the first ever land surveys in the future state of Kentucky. Consequent to these surveys, six future Fincastle Resolutions signers took up Kentucky tracts: Arthur Campbell, William Christian, William Ingles, William Preston, William Russell, and Evan Shelby. Other prominent persons taking up Kentucky tracts at this same time included William Byrd III, William Fleming, Patrick Henry, and George Washington.⁵⁰ A recruiting circular published by William Preston of Smithfield Plantation on 20 July 1774 calling for men to fight Indians illustrates the role of Indian conflict in the western frontier and the attitude of the frontiersmen toward Indians:

... Lord Dunmore has called upon me to [raise] two Hundred & fifty Men ... in Defence of our Lives and Properties, which have been so long exposed to the Savages. ... [W]ithout all Doubt [success will] enable his Lordship to reward every Volunteer in a handsome manner, over and above his Pay; as the plunder of the County will be valluable, & it is said the Shawnese have a great Stock of Horses. ... This useless People may now at last be Obliged to abandon their Country Their Towns may be plundered & Burned, Their Cornfields Distroyed; & they Distressed in such a manner as will prevent them from giving us any future Trouble; Therefore I hope the men will Readily & cheerfully engage in the Expedition as They will not only be conducted by their own Officers but they will be Assisted by a great Number of Officers & Soldiers raised behind the Mountains whose Bravery they cannot be Doubtfull The Eyes of this & the Neighbouring Colonies are upon us, The Governor of Virginia calls for us, Our County [Fincastle] is ready to pay, & support us; & all the [counties] behind the great Mountains are willing to Join in Assisting us. Our Cause is good; & theirfore we have the greatest Reason, to hope & expect that Heaven will bless us with Success in the Defence of ourselves, & families against a parcel of Murdering Savages.⁵¹

John Alden offers a counterbalance to William Preston's caustic views:

... the southern Indian was often temperamental and untrustworthy; occasionally he was dishonest and vicious. With all his faults, however, he compares favorably with the white man with whom he had most frequent contact, the outlaw, the ne'er-do-well, the rum seller, the squatter, and the land speculator. If he had the faults of the barbarian, he had his virtues also.⁵²

Virginia Governor Dunmore considered the land-hunger of the Virginians to be insatiable:

... I have learnt from experience that the established Authority of any government in America, and the policy of Government at home, are both insufficient to restrain the Americans; and that they do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to Place: But wandering about Seems engrafted in their Nature; and it is a weakness incident to it, that they Should for ever immagine the Lands further off, are Still better than those upon which they are already Settled.⁵³

Fincastle County and Dunmore's War

In 1774 the key event that occupied the months of July–November in western Virginia was the military campaign known to history as Dunmore's War.⁵⁴ It was a campaign by the colony of Virginia against the Indian tribes based in Ohio intended to neutralize permanently the depredations of those tribes along Virginia's western frontier. The War had profound consequences for the people of Fincastle County.

John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, Viscount Fincastle, and so on, was a Scot who had been appointed governor of Virginia in 1771 and who turned out to be the last British governor of the colony. He campaigned against the western Mingo and Shawnee Indians and personally led one of two wings of the Virginia army.⁵⁵ For his northern wing of the army, Dunmore collected men from the northern counties of western Virginia: Hampshire, Dunmore (later Shenandoah), Augusta, and West Augusta. For the southern wing of the army, Andrew Lewis collected men from Fincastle and Botetourt counties. By the end of September, Dunmore and 700 men had moved by canoes and flatboats down the Ohio to Fort Fincastle (modern Wheeling). There they joined men led by William Crawford and Adam Stephen, making a force of about 1,500 men. Meanwhile, having gathered 1,000 men at Camp Union at the Great Levels (present-day Lewisburg, West Virginia), Lewis left from there to advance up the Kanawha Valley to the Ohio River.

The southern wing of the army, under the command of Andrew Lewis, clashed first with the Indians at the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers and bore the brunt of the fighting at the Battle of Point Pleasant on 10 October 1774. Both the frontiersmen and the Indians suffered heavy casualties in a hard fight that lasted all day. In the end, the Indians withdrew. After Lewis and his men had regrouped, both wings of the army advanced westward into modern-day central Ohio to threaten Indian towns, and on 20 October 1774 Dunmore and the chiefs concluded "The Terms of our Reconciliation," known afterward as the "Treaty of Camp Charlotte." The Indians gave Virginia hostages as part of the reconciliation, and we have been left with an interesting account of some of them.⁵⁶ As a consequence of the battle, Indian power in the Ohio country went into a steep decline.⁵⁷

Historians have long speculated about Dunmore's motives for his war. Among them must have been the desire to secure Virginia from Indian



Figure 2. Blockhouses, such as the one re-created in Natural Tunnel State Park (near Duffield, Virginia) shown at right, were the last line of retreat for frontier settlers. At the far right, "Captain Joseph Martin, who is present with the militia forces from Martin's Station, and Captain Boone conduct a parlay with Atta Kul Kulla, Oconostota, and others." Taken by the author at the re-enactment "siege at the Wilderness Road Blockhouse," May, 2009.

attacks; his public and private land interests in the Ohio country; his wish to promote Virginia interests in the region over those of the rival colony of Pennsylvania; and, perhaps, he simply enjoyed the adventure of campaigning and wanted to get out of Williamsburg. Holton has argued⁵⁸ that land speculators provoked the war with the plan of forcing the Shawnee and Mingo Indians to cede title to Kentucky land to Virginians.

The signers of the Fincastle Resolutions were doubtless strongly influenced by their experiences during Dunmore's War. Six⁵⁹ of the fifteen signers participated directly in the war; all the others were engaged in the defense of their home regions of Fincastle County — a critically important role, as the absence of so many men of fighting age on a western campaign left the Fincastle people weakened and exposed to Indian attacks.⁶⁰

The assessment of Robert L. Scribner captures the ironic operation of the law of unintended consequences in Dunmore's legacy to American history:

Born under an unlucky star: at least insofar as his intentions deviated from the results of his deeds, the peer-governor of Virginia by the terms of his convention staunchly served the cause of American independence. He pro-

vided that in the spring of 1775 there should be concluded at Fort Pitt a treaty embracing all the tribes of the Ohio country. Thereby he assured peace on the frontiers. By that peace, which was to last for three years, he freed for employment elsewhere the rifles that helped tatter an Anglo-German army at Saratoga and, coupled with Washington's audacious attack at Germantown, brought France to play a decisive role in the war. And by temporarily stopping Indian incursions into Kentucky, he opened the lands there to a flood of white settlements that formed the base for operations against British control in the Old Northwest. These would not be His Lordship's last contributions to the American cause, but they would be his greatest; and although he would not have wished it, nor is it likely to occur, should there be a day in which space is provided in Independence Hall for portraits of stepfathers of the republic, his should be most conspicuously mounted.⁶¹

The Fort Gower Resolves

In almost the final act of Dunmore's War, the Governor's officers composed a revolutionary statement (called Dunmore's Officers' or the Fort Gower Resolves) that served as a precursor to the Fincastle Resolutions.

After Dunmore had concluded the Camp Charlotte treaty, he and much of the army moved back to the Ohio River to a rude log blockhouse called Fort Gower, located at the confluence of Hockhocking Creek and the Ohio (about 12 miles SW of present-day Parkersburg, West Virginia). Fort Gower was constructed across the Ohio from land owned by George Washington,⁶² and Dunmore and the troops probably reached there by about the third or fourth day of November.

The Fort Gower document (reproduced in Appendix E) consists of a preamble and two resolves drawn up at that place on 5 November 1774 at a "Meeting of the Officers under the Command of his Excellency the Right Honourable the EARL of DUNMORE," and "for the Purpose of considering the Grievances of BRITISH AMERICA." The only signature on the document was that of the clerk, Benjamin Ashby. No hand-written copy is known to exist, and our primary source is the version published on 22 December 1774 in Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette*.⁶³ After expressing the *de rigueur* loyalty to the king, the first resolve states "... we resolve that we will exert every power within us for the defense of American Lib-

erty.” In the second resolve the officers praise their field commander, Lord Dunmore. The preamble remarks that the officers previously lacked news from Boston or Philadelphia, asserts that the army can “shoot with any in the known world,” and that it will use that ability “to maintain and defend [America’s] just Rights and Privileges” and for “the Honour and Advantage of America in general, and of Virginia in particular.”

After being four weeks in the field and away from communication with the coast, the men of Dunmore’s army were no doubt thirsting for information about current events. We have on the authority of Daniel Morgan that the army heard about the actions of the Continental Congress when it got back to Fort Gower and before it adopted its Resolves. Morgan said:

After we had beat [the Indians] and reduced them to order and were on our way home, we heard, at the mouth of the Hocking, on the Ohio, that hostilities were offered to our brethren, the people of Boston. We as an army immediately formed ourselves into a society, pledging our honors to assist the Bostonians, in case of a serious breach, which did take place on the 19th of the following April at Lexington.⁶⁴

Despite the obvious connections between the Fort Gower Resolves and the Fincastle Resolutions (they were adopted only 10 weeks apart and by some of the same men), they have rarely been linked by historians. Margaret Campbell Pilcher compared excerpts from the two documents in 1895,⁶⁵ and Agnes Graham Sanders Riley discussed them in consecutive paragraphs in 1985 in a biographical article about William Campbell.⁶⁶

Who were the officers present at the adoption of the Fort Gower Resolves? In the most useful discussion of the Resolves, John Robbins⁶⁷ tells that some of the officers present at Fort Gower were: George Rogers Clark, Daniel Morgan, Michael Cresap, Ebenezer Zane, William Russell, William Harrod, Simon Kenton, and Simon Girty — a group of men whose names would become very familiar during the next seven years of the Revolution. Robbins tells further that the Resolves were published in at least five colonies, and that it was Angus McDonald who took a copy of the Resolves to Williamsburg for publication (on 22 December 1774). In addition to their American publication, the Resolves were read in the House of Lords in London by the Marquis of Rockingham during a parliamentary debate in March 1775, only four months after their adoption on the Ohio frontier.⁶⁸

The available records do not make it clear which of the Fincastle signers were present at Fort Gower on 5 November to concur in those Resolves. We know William Christian was not there because he left for William Preston's Smithfield Plantation around 1 November, and was there on 8 November.⁶⁹ William Russell, on the other hand, was present, as he says so in a letter to William Preston.⁷⁰ In a postscript to the same letter Russell tells Preston: "N. B. I have Inclosed for your satisfaction, an Address of the Officers with my Ld. considering the greivances of British America, which I shall be glad you wood send to Colo. Christian." Thus the Fincastle signers Russell, Preston, and Christian surely knew of the Fort Gower Resolves. Lyman Draper⁷¹ and Agnes Graham Sanders Riley⁷² propose that William Campbell was actually present. Walter Crockett, William Ingles, and Evan Shelby also could have been present at Fort Gower on 5 November as no known evidence places them elsewhere on that date.

Probably Colonel Adam Stephen, Dunmore's second-in-command of the northern wing of the Virginia army, was the principal author and promoter of the Fort Gower Resolves. Stephen was an officer with a demonstrated record of favoring American rebellion, and he maintained a correspondence with Richard Henry Lee of Westmoreland County. Near the start of Dunmore's campaign, on 27 August 1774, Stephen wrote to Lee, who was soon to depart for Philadelphia to attend the Continental Congress, saying

The fate of America depends on your meeting, and the eyes of the European world hang upon you, waiting the event. ... I expect that ... matters will come to extremity. It appears to me, that [the British] intend to irritate America into rebellion, and then govern us like a conquered people."⁷³

Stephen wrote again in a similar vein to Lee in February 1775. Stephen's biographer, Harry Ward, is a proponent of Stephen's authorship of the Fort Gower Resolves and argues that the language and phrasing of the Resolves implicate Stephen.⁷⁴ Ward also points out that before adopting their Resolves, the officers had undoubtedly learned of the Continental Congress's actions, particularly its adoption of the Suffolk Resolves and its "Declaration and Resolves," published in Philadelphia on 14 October 1774.

Why are Dunmore's War and the Fort Gower Resolves not better known in American and Virginia history? The best answer to that question has been provided by Warren Hofstra, who wrote: "Events at Point

Pleasant, Camp Charlotte, and Fort Pitt were soon overshadowed by the American Revolution and largely lost to the larger narrative of American history.”⁷⁵

Incidentally, concerning the frontiersmen practiced and skilled at using rifles who were at Fort Gower, John Robbins says trenchantly that compared with men using inefficient, British-issued, Brown Bess muskets, “... the frontier riflemen and their leaders would stand and fight just as quickly and much more lethally than their brethren, the Minutemen in Massachusetts.” This point was exceedingly well demonstrated by the men of Fincastle County seven years later in 1781 at the Battle of King’s Mountain.

December 1774

The Fincastle Resolutions were probably drafted in December 1774. It was likely not much earlier because several of the signers were still on their way back from participating in Dunmore’s War, and it could not have been much later because they were adopted on 20 January 1775.

The known documentary record does not tell if any of the signers were in eastern Virginia between the end of Dunmore’s War and the adoption of the Fincastle Resolutions. However, several of the signers had family connections to Patrick Henry. For example, toward the War’s end, signer Christian’s wife (Henry’s sister) had traveled east for her safety and was living at her brother’s home in Scotchtown, in Hanover County. While she was there, in late October 1774, her brother returned home from an absence of seven weeks in Philadelphia, where he had been attending the first Continental Congress.⁷⁶

In 1767 William Christian, then about twenty-five years old, had traveled east from his family home near Staunton in Augusta County to Hanover County to study law with Patrick Henry.⁷⁷ By January 1768, Christian had been “making addresses” to Patrick Henry’s sister Anne, as her father said in a letter to Israel, Christian’s father.⁷⁸ The couple married sometime in the spring of 1768. Around that time, Patrick Henry’s father-in-law, John Shelton, was threatened with bankruptcy. In consequence, Henry first made Shelton large cash advances and later acquired an interest in Shelton’s land on Moccasin Creek in the Clinch River watershed and other tracts on the Holston River.⁷⁹

In a search for Shelton’s tracts in which he had an interest,⁸⁰ Patrick Henry traveled through southwestern Virginia in 1768,⁸¹ where it was said Henry gained a deep personal knowledge of the region and came to ap-

preciate its importance for the future expansion of Virginia. He apparently traversed the entire length of Southwest Virginia as far as modern-day Bristol on the Virginia-Tennessee state line. Along with him on this land inspection tour went his brother William Henry and his law student William Christian, who was by then probably already Henry's brother-in-law.⁸²

Around 1770, signer Thomas Madison, an Augusta County resident in 1769 who became a Botetourt County resident in 1770 when that county was formed, married Patrick Henry's youngest sister Susanna. Documentary evidence about Madison is sparse. Only a sketch of him seems to be extant. It is certain, however, that he was elected to the vestry of Augusta County in 1769⁸³ and admitted to practice law in Botetourt County in 1770.⁸⁴

Patrick Henry is clearly a prominent candidate to have influenced the Fincastle signers. He had significant present and future family connections with four of the signers. Here's what Patrick Henry's biographer Robert Douthat Meade has to say in general about leaders of revolutions and in particular about Henry's brothers-in-law:

Throughout history revolutions have usually been the work of determined minorities. Rarely has the leadership come from the lowest class. There is no more formidable organizer of revolution than an aristocrat, or at least a man of the middle class with some education and the character to help him cling to a principle; witness Julius Caesar or Oliver Cromwell, and now Patrick Henry. On his secluded plantation during that winter of 1774–1775, almost crushed by family troubles, Henry could not then carry the ball of revolution as did Samuel and John Adams. Nor was the British yoke felt as heavily in Virginia; in Massachusetts, not only was the chief port of Boston closed but the city was garrisoned and other liberties were suspended. Yet early in the new year, there were signs that Henry's political principles were still spreading through receptive associates, especially friends and relatives, and that they were contributing to the mounting reaction against the ministerial policy.

After the concrete action of the First Continental Congress, early that fall, a flock of other resolutions was passed in various Virginia counties and Whig sentiments were bandied about through publication in the *Virginia Gazette*s and by word of mouth. At a meeting in distant Southwest Virginia of the Fincastle freeholders on January 20, 1775, Henry's brother-in-law, Colonel William Christian, was elected chairman of the committee to see that the boycott of British goods was properly executed. Other committee

members whom Henry must have influenced, directly or indirectly, included another of his brothers-in-law, Captain Thomas Madison, and his future brother-in-law, young Captain William Russell⁸⁵

We amplify Meade's above list of brothers-in-law by pointing out that William Campbell of Fincastle was the first husband of Elizabeth Henry and that he would marry her in April 1776.⁸⁶ William Russell would become her second husband only after Campbell's death in 1781.

As we have seen, William Christian, returning from Dunmore's War, was at Smithfield Plantation on 8 November 1774. However, his wife Anne, to escape the potential dangers of an exposed frontier, had earlier fled east from the Christian family home at Mahanaim⁸⁷ (at Dunkard's Bottom in present-day Pulaski County⁸⁸) to her brother Patrick Henry's home, in Hanover County. Clear proof of Anne Christian's presence at her brother's home comes from a letter so-stating written by her sister-in-law⁸⁹ and from two letters she herself wrote.⁹⁰ Quite likely, William Christian traveled to Scotchtown in October or November in 1774 to see his wife, whom he had not seen since his departure several months earlier on Dunmore's campaign. If so, Christian surely would have discussed the political affairs of America with the newly-returned-from-Philadelphia Patrick Henry. It is also conceivable that around this time Henry had contact with other signers. For example, we know nothing about the whereabouts or movements at this time of Thomas Madison. However, as Henry's brother-in-law, he probably would have been in regular contact with Henry.

William Christian's Ride

Whether or not he was in eastern Virginia before Christmas of 1774, William Christian was definitely there immediately after the Fincastle Resolutions had been signed, and his journey to Williamsburg has been philatelically immortalized (Figure 3). Surely the Fincastle committee is the only one whose activities have been so honored, despite the fact that we don't actually know whether he rode or walked.

About Christian's ride, Robert Douthat Meade wrote that:

Henry's beloved brother-in-law, Colonel Christian, is known to have been in Williamsburg just before the Fincastle Resolutions were published on 10 February 1775, in Purdie's *Virginia Gazette*. He probably brought them on the long trip to the low country. Since Christian was a delegate to the [second] Virginia Convention the next month, there is strong reason to believe

Figure 3. William Christian's antecedents came from the Isle of Man. Shown at the right is the "Carrying the Fincastle Resolutions" stamp. Isle of Man Post Office Authority. American Revolution Bicentennial 1776–1976: Commemorating Col. William Christian 1976; Date of Issue — 12 March 1976. Printed by Waddingtons Security Print Ltd. The stamp carries the legend: "William Christian carrying the Fincastle Resolutions to Williamsburg." It depicts a mounted, galloping horseman over a shadowed copy of the *Virginia Gazette* against a backdrop of mountains. In addition to "our" William Christian, the other well-known Christian from the Isle of Man is Fletcher, the mutineer of H.M.S. *Bounty*. Used with permission.



that at Scotchtown or elsewhere he talked over with Henry the ominous political events. ... Outside the family circle, Henry had few intimates, and there was no group of men who would offer him more staunch advice — or be more receptive to his daring plans — than his frontier kinsmen.⁹¹

About the Signers of the Fincastle Resolutions

Table 3 summarizes key information about the signers and links to footnotes that list biographical sources. In connection with the 200th anniversary celebration of the Fincastle Resolutions, Mary Kegley wrote a short collective sketch of the signers.⁹² Her sketch was written against a tight deadline and was published without citations. That omission is in part corrected here, as many of her carefully researched studies of individual signers are cited in the footnotes that accompany Table 3.

Several of the signers occupy significant places in Virginia and American history. William Preston played a crucial role in the surveying and development of western lands, exerted great influence in eighteenth century colonial affairs, supervised a large plantation, and founded a dynasty whose progeny would supply leaders for the South for a century or more. William

Table 3. Brief Sketches of the Fifteen Signers Footnoted
with Biographical Citations

Arthur Campbell ⁹³	1743–1811. Born in Augusta County of Scots-Irish descent. For three years an Indian captive during the French and Indian War. He moved to Southwest Virginia circa 1768. Aged about 32 when he signed. Later Lieutenant Colonel of Washington County militia, justice of the peace, and member of the House of Delegates. Campaigned against the Cherokees. Land magnate. Later active in the movement to form the State of Franklin.
William Campbell ⁹⁴	1745–1781. Born in Augusta County of Scots-Irish descent. Moved to Aspsvale about 1769. Aged about 30 when he signed. Inherited the Salt Works from his father. He married Elizabeth Henry, the sister of Patrick Henry, in Henrico Parish on 2 April 1776. He was a justice of the peace in Fincastle and Washington counties. Aggressive opponent of Tories. He was at the Battle of Point Pleasant. Later he became known as the “Hero of King’s Mountain,” where he commanded the overmountain army.
William Christian ⁹⁵	1743–1786. Born near Staunton in Augusta County of Manx descent. Moved to Dunkard’s Bottom about 1772. Aged about 32 when he signed. Married Anne Henry about 1768. Commanded the Fincastle men at the Battle of Point Pleasant. Member of the House of Burgesses. Land magnate. Later he was Colonel of the First Virginia regiment. Campaigned against the Cherokees in 1776. Moved to Kentucky in 1784 and was killed by Indians in 1786. It is often said, probably wrongly, that the town of Christiansburg, Virginia is named after him. ⁹⁶
Walter Crockett ⁹⁷	Circa 1735–1811. Birthplace uncertain, perhaps the future Augusta County. His father was born in County Donegal. Moved to Southwest Virginia about 1768? Aged about 40 when he signed. Served in Dunmore’s War. Served as a justice of the peace successively for Augusta, Botetourt, and Fincastle counties. A Captain of militia in Fincastle County. Later became the first Clerk of Court of Wythe County. Built a mill. Delegate to the 1778 Virginia Convention. Served four terms in the Virginia General Assembly.
Charles Cummings ⁹⁸	1746–1818. Born in County Donegal. Moved from Augusta to the Holston in 1772. Aged about 29 when he signed. Presbyterian minister. Licensed to preach at the age of 19 the same year he married Millicent Carter. Called to the congregations of Ebbing Spring and Sinking Spring on the Middle Fork Holston on 2 June 1772.

Table 3, Brief Sketches..., continued

William Edmondson ⁹⁹	1734–1822. Born in Maryland of Irish descent (possibly Huguenot). He moved first to Rockbridge County and then to Lodi on the Holston Middle Fork in the 1770s. Aged about 41 when he signed. Lieutenant Colonel of the Fincastle Militia. Served in Dunmore's War. Fought at King's Mountain. Was for many years a sheriff.
William Ingles ¹⁰⁰	1729–1782. Father born in Ireland. Place of birth unknown. Moved to Stroubles Creek circa 1753. Established Ingles' ferry in modern-day Radford about 1762. About age 46 when he signed. Married Mary Draper the Indian captive. At the Battle of Point Pleasant. Served as a justice of the peace for Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery counties. Owned many thousands of acres of land across a wide region stretching to western Kentucky.
Thomas Madison ¹⁰¹	1746–1798. Born in Augusta County. Moved to Southwest Virginia about 1773. Aged about 29 when he signed. Married about 1770 Susanna Henry, sister of Patrick. Admitted to practice law in Botetourt County in 1770 and in Fincastle County in 1774. Associated with the Madison Lead Mines Company. A Thomas Madison lived in Saltville in the late 1770s but it is not clear if this was the same man.
James McGavock ¹⁰²	1728–1812. Born in County Antrim. Had land surveyed near modern Roanoke in 1754 and moved to Fort Chiswell in the 1770s where he ran an ordinary, mill, and trading post. Aged about 47 when he signed. Served during Dunmore's War but did not go on the western campaign. Was a justice of the peace in Botetourt, Fincastle, Montgomery, and Wythe counties. Operated a tavern at Fort Chiswell.
John Montgomery ¹⁰³	1717–1802. Born in County Donegal. Moved to Reed Creek in present Wythe County, possibly as early as 1756. Served as a captain during the French and Indian War. Aged about 58 when he signed. Served during Dunmore's War but did not go on the western campaign. He was a justice of the peace in Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery counties. Later he served a term in the Virginia General Assembly and was sheriff of Montgomery County.
William Preston ¹⁰⁴	1729–1783. Born in County Donegal, crossed the Atlantic at the age of nine with his uncle, James Patton. Married Susanna Smith in 1761. Moved from Staunton to Greenfield about 1763 and to Smithfield about 1774. Aged about 46 when he signed. Owner of the Smithfield Plantation. A major figure in Virginia history. Involved in land deals with leading eastern Virginians. Surveyor, member of the House of Burgesses, Colonel of militia, holder of many high offices. Land magnate. A prolific correspondent who left a voluminous documentary record.

Table 3, Brief Sketches..., continued

William Russell ¹⁰⁵	1735–1792. Father born in England. He was born in modern Culpeper County. Moved to the Clinch River settlements about 1770. Became a justice of the peace when Fincastle County was organized. Aged about 40 when he signed. He was at the Battle of Point Pleasant and at Fort Gower. Second husband of Elizabeth Henry.
Evan Shelby ¹⁰⁶	1720–1794. Born in Wales. Served as a scout during the Braddock campaign in 1758. Moved to Bristol about 1771. Aged about 55 when he signed. He was a merchant, farmer, and cattle raiser. He was at the Battle of Point Pleasant. His son Isaac became governor of Kentucky.
Daniel Smith ¹⁰⁷	1748–1818. Born in Stafford County. Moved to Southwest Virginia about 1770. He conducted early surveys on the Holston watershed. Aged about 27 when he signed. He was a Captain of Militia in Fincastle County. He defended the Clinch Settlements with Daniel Boone during Dunmore's War. He moved to the Cumberland settlements after the war. Later U.S. senator from Tennessee.
Stephen Trigg ¹⁰⁸	1742–1782. Born in Bedford County. Moved to Dunkard's Bottom about 1770. Aged about 33 when he signed. Became a merchant at New Dublin. Married William Christian's sister Mary and was associated with his father-in-law (Israel) in business. He was a Captain of Militia in Fincastle County and served as a justice of the peace for Augusta and Botetourt counties. He moved to Kentucky in 1777 and was killed at the Battle of Blue Licks.

Campbell's military role at the Battle of King's Mountain immortalized him, and it is at least arguable that without that victory the Revolution would have failed. The roles of Daniel Smith and William Christian are also noteworthy.

As cited in the endnotes to Table 3, three of the signers – A. Campbell, Preston, and Smith – have been the subjects of full-scale biographies. Russell and McGavock have been the subjects of genealogical biographies. Christian and Russell have been the subjects of master's theses. Thus, extended works have been published about six of the fifteen. Most of the signers were either immigrants or first-generation Americans. Four (Cumings, McGavock, Montgomery, and Preston) were born in Northern Ireland. One (Shelby) was born in Wales. Two or three (A. Campbell and W. Campbell, and possibly Crockett) were born in Augusta County to Scots-Irish parents. Ingles also seems to have been of Scots-Irish descent.

Four (Madison, Russell, Smith, and Trigg) were possibly of English stock. Christian was of Manx descent. Edmondson has been variously said to have been of Scots-Irish or Huguenot descent.

All were active in military affairs, most as officers, some as suppliers and provisioners of the forces; even Cummings was the “fighting parson.” Their military prowess was honed in the ghastly arena of Indian fighting and for many of them it provided an intensely personal experience. Even those who did not go out and campaign actively against the American Indians spent much energy defending their homes, lives, and families against Indian attack.¹⁰⁹ As a teenager, Arthur Campbell was held for three years as an Indian captive in Detroit. William Russell suffered the loss of his son Henry to an unspeakable fate when his son and Daniel Boone’s son (James) were tortured to death and buried in a common grave near Wallens Ridge, Virginia, in October 1773 while on an early venture into the Kentucky country.

All of the signers owned some land; most owned a lot of land and were involved in land speculation. Christian and Preston were first-rank land speculators. As a group, the signers formed the political core of the region, and they served Fincastle and its predecessor and derivative counties as justices, sheriffs, delegates, elected officials, militia officers, clerks, treasurers, surveyors, and in other public positions of authority. They were newly made men in a newly made region and they acquitted themselves well.

Where Were the Fincastle Resolutions Promulgated?

The much-reported tradition (in dozens of secondary sources and scores of newspaper articles) that the Fincastle Resolutions were adopted at the Lead Mines is probably wrong. In the grand scheme of history, it is a small point as to where the adoption of the Fincastle Resolutions occurred. However, the point is an interesting one, and one which tells that this widely accepted local tradition of Southwest Virginia history does not pass the test of careful historical analysis. Credit is due to two earlier historians of Southwest Virginia who questioned the conventional wisdom: T. L. Preston¹¹⁰ and P. G. Johnson,¹¹¹ both of whom wrote that the Fincastle Resolutions were adopted at Fort Chiswell¹¹² and not at the Lead Mines. A comprehensive reading of the available documentary evidence, and consideration of the geographic realities, together make it highly likely that the

Resolutions were actually signed ten miles distant from the Lead Mines at James McGavock's ordinary at Fort Chiswell.

In a display of political favoritism in late 1772, Governor Dunmore ordered that the court house for the newly-formed Fincastle County be placed at the Lead Mines on land owned by William Byrd III.¹¹³ This decision was immediately challenged on 6 January 1773, at the first session of the county court, by William Preston and others who recommended to the governor that the court house be moved to Crockett and McCaul's land on the Great Road about ten miles west of Fort Chiswell, and just east of the present town of Wytheville, because it "lies on the Great Road that passes thro the County" and "it is well watered Timbered & Levell" and "it is much more Central than the Mines."¹¹⁴ Preston continued his challenge in letters to William Byrd himself,¹¹⁵ and to Edmund Pendleton, a leading figure in the Virginia Association.¹¹⁶ In June 1774 Pendleton replied to Preston expressing sympathy for moving the court house, and telling Preston that he (Pendleton) would approach William Byrd III about such a move.¹¹⁷

Though composed of many of the same men as were officers of the county court, the Fincastle committee was not a court and certainly had no obligation to meet at the court house. The inconvenience of the Lead Mines as a meeting place (the mines were ten miles distant from the principal travel-way through the region: the Great Road) had been known for more than ten years. In consequence, James McGavock, who lived in the Fort Chiswell complex and became agent¹¹⁸ for the fort probably as early as 1760, had "...made of his house a headquarters where committees and officials could congregate to transact their business."¹¹⁹

There is no extant record of where the Fincastle committee met when it adopted its resolutions on 20 January 1775. However, documents in the State Library of Virginia, reproduced and published by Harwell¹²⁰ in 1956, do tell exactly where the Fincastle committee met on several subsequent occasions. It met at Mr. James McGavock's (at Fort Chiswell) on 8 November 1775, and again there on 27 November 1775, and again there on 23 February 1776. On 4 April 1776 it met at New Dublin in present-day Pulaski County and at Fort Chiswell on 11 June 1776. There is in point of fact not one documentary record of the committee ever meeting at the Lead Mines, despite hundreds of later statements to that effect.

The closest documentary evidence to being a smoking gun is Draper manuscript 7ZZ6 reproduced in *Revolutionary Virginia*, volume 2, page 193. It is dated Fincastle County, 18 February 1775, signed by William Christian and Stephen Trigg, and reads:

Whereas Delegates from each County & Corporation are to meet at Richmond Town near the falls of James River, on Monday the 20th. day of March to Represent them in Convention. Therefore the Freeholders of this County are requested to meet at Mr. McGavocks on Tuesday the Seventh day of March in order to Elect Two persons for that purpose.

So four weeks after the adoption of the Fincastle Resolutions we know that the committee that adopted those resolutions was called to meet at James McGavock's ordinary.

Today, the principal road that passes through the Wythe County remnant of Fincastle County is Interstate Highway 81, and the geographic reality is that a trip from the site of Fort Chiswell to the Lead Mines requires a 10-mile journey southward over country roads. Today, as in 1775, the need to sidetrack off the main route to get to the Lead Mines is identical.

To get to the Lead Mines from their homes (Figure 4), the signers¹²¹ would have traveled the Great Road and thus would have naturally

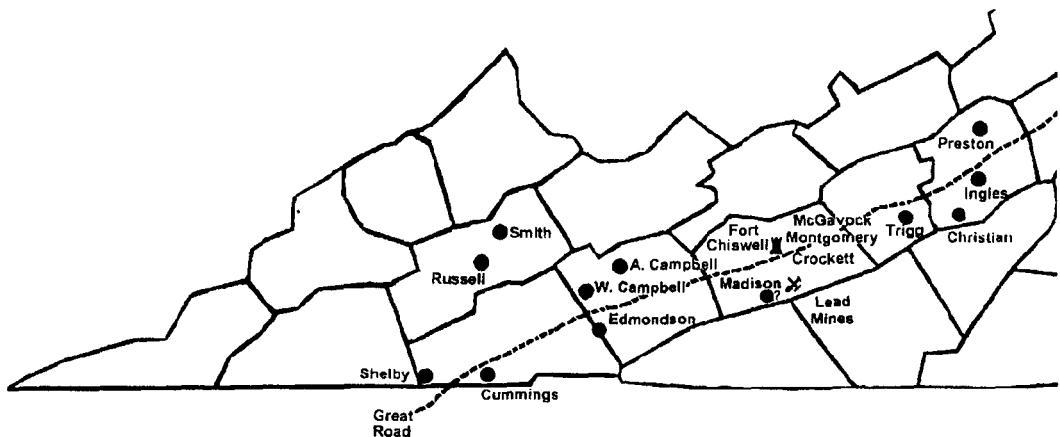


Figure 4. The homes of the signers in 1774–1775. Also shown are Fort Chiswell, the Lead Mines, and the Great Road, the principal travel route through the region. All the positions are approximate and shown against the outlines of the modern counties. Fourteen of the signers are at about the correct sites. Lacking direct evidence, the shown location of Thomas Madison is speculative.

congregated at McGavock's at Fort Chiswell. It is illogical that they would together travel as a party an additional ten miles to hold a meeting when they were already together at a congenial place, with good bread and whiskey as reported by a traveler who was there in March 1775,¹²² and a place that had, as noted above, been designed to accommodate precisely such meetings.

Although not absolutely provable, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the Fincastle Resolutions were signed at McGavock's ordinary.

Who Wrote the Fincastle Resolutions?

Many writers have indulged themselves in speculating about who wrote the Fincastle Resolutions, but the fact is we do not know. They likely were not the work of a single individual. Their significance is that they reveal the collective view of many men on the frontier at an important moment in American history. As John Adams famously wrote in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, "The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington."¹²³ The Fincastle Resolutions are surely an apt example of that revolution-in-the-mind at work.

"Tradition"¹²⁴ says that Reverend Cummings wrote them. Ira Redmond Roop posited¹²⁵ that committee clerk David Campbell and William Christian had the major roles. Patricia Givens Johnson observed that it is possible that William Preston, aided by the Smithfield schoolmaster Aaron Palfrenen, composed them.¹²⁶ T. L. Preston,¹²⁷ L. P. Summers,¹²⁸ and Mary Kegley (personal communication) hold the position that any one of the signers was sufficiently literate and intelligent to have been the author. The only thing perhaps to be added is that the writing of the resolutions was possibly influenced by one of Lord Dunmore's officers or by Patrick Henry or someone in his immediate circle.

If the subject of authorship were to be investigated, and such an investigation is hardly necessary, we should perhaps look to some scholar of textual analysis to make a detailed comparison of the language in the texts in the appendices here and other comparable documents from the period, such as the Fairfax Resolves.

Summary and Conclusions

In response to the Virginia Association's call that the men planning to attend might collect the "sense of their respective counties" in advance of

the convention to be held eight weeks later, forty Virginia jurisdictions held meetings between June–July 1774 and most adopted resolutions. Nineteen more, now responding to the authority of the Continental Congress, acted between December 1774 and March 1775, formed committees and, in the case of the western counties, made resolutions. Chronologically, the Fincastle committee acted forty-sixth of fifty-nine jurisdictions.

While thoughts of overturning British rule in the colony had surely occurred to the men of Western Virginia in 1774, they were far more occupied with fighting Indians, trying to acquire western land, and opening the future state of Kentucky for settlement. Making the statement of the Fincastle Resolutions was important to them, but it was only one of the important matters that claimed their attention.

The Fincastle Resolutions should be considered in relation to the Augusta, Botetourt, and Pittsylvania resolves. All four western counties acted late in the process because of the involvement of their leaders and people in Dunmore's War, but when they acted they produced by far the most important documents of the second wave of committee actions. The men of all four counties resolved that they would give their lives for American independence. All the counties acknowledged they formed their committees in response to the call of the First Continental Congress held in Philadelphia in October 1774.

The actions of the western committees should be placed in the context of the Fort Gower Resolves which concluded Dunmore's War. Many members of the Fincastle committee, and of the committees of the other western counties, knew about those Resolves. Several Fincastle committee members were likely present and assented to them when those Resolves were adopted.

Strictly speaking, the Fincastle Resolutions are not actually resolutions. As published, the record of the Fincastle committee is in the form of an address to Virginia's representatives to the Continental Congress. Where the terms *resolves* or *resolutions* are used, they refer to the work of the Congress, except at the very end where the Fincastle freeholders say that in the cause of liberty and loyalty "we are resolved to live and die."

No proof exists that the Fincastle resolutions were ever actually signed. They were adopted at James McGavock's ordinary at Fort Chiswell and not as tradition says at the Lead Mines.

Future Work

As ever in historical research, we seek more primary documents and to analyze the existing primary documents more comprehensively. For example, there are at least three extant letters written by William Preston¹²⁹ in late January 1775 that notably speak about land acquisitions and uniformly fail to mention the Fincastle Resolutions adopted just a few days earlier. More biographical work on the signers is desirable, especially on the less well-known signers, such as Thomas Madison, who remains something of an enigma. Possibly valuable, and certainly interesting, would be a detailed textual analysis of the resolutions comparing phrases within them with phrases in other documents — a study of this kind might shed light on the author of the Resolutions. Likewise, a comparative textual analysis of the writings of the signers might provide some hints about possible authorship.

Acknowledgments

Hugh Campbell suggested that the time was ripe for a scholarly examination of the Fincastle Resolutions. Mary Kegley read and commented on many portions of this work as it developed and on the first draft, and generously supported the efforts of the author. Brent Tarter commented on the first and second drafts; the mistakes and errors that remain are solely the responsibility of the author. John Robbins provided useful discussions. Christy Mackie and Wesley J. Campbell commented on the second draft. Cathy Carlson Reynolds transcribed the Edmund Pendleton to William Preston letter and also commented on the second draft. Several anonymous referees provided constructive criticisms that helped to improve the arguments made here. The staff of the Interlibrary Loan Office at Newman Library were, as always, supportive as were the staff of Newman Library Special Collections. Mr. Paul Ford of the Isle of Man postal authority granted permission to reproduce the William Christian stamp. Deena Flinchum gave strong and continuing support.

Appendix A¹³⁰The Fincastle Resolutions¹³¹

WILLIAMSBURG, February 10.

Fincastle, Jan. 20, 1775.

In obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress, a meeting of the freeholders of this county was held this day, who, after approving of the association framed by that august body in behalf of all the colonies, and subscribing thereto, proceeded to the election of a committee, to see the same carried punctually into execution, when the following Gentlemen were nominated: Reverend Charles Cummings, Colonel William Preston, Colonel William Christian, Captain Stephen Trigg, Major Arthur Campbell, Major William Inglis, Captain Walter Crockett, Captain John Montgomery, Captain James McGavock, Captain William Campbell, Captain Thomas Madison, Captain Daniel Smith, Captain William Russell, Captain Evan Shelby and Lieutenant William Edmondson.

After the election the committee made choice of Colonel WILLIAM CHRISTIAN for their chairman, and appointed Mr. David Campbell to be clerk.

The following address was then unanimously agreed to by the people of the county, and is as follows.

To the Honorable Peyton Randolph, Esq; Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, junior, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton, Esquires, the Delegates from this colony who attended the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia:

Gentlemen,

Had it not been for our remote situation, and the Indian war which we were lately engaged in, to chastise those cruel and savage people for the many murders and depredations they have committed against us (now happily terminated, under the auspices of our present worthy Governour, his Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Dunmore) we should before this time have made known to you our thankfulness for the very important services you have rendered to your country, in conjunction with the worthy Delegates from the other provinces. Your noble efforts for reconciling the Mother Country and the Colonies, on rational and constitutional principles, and your pacifick, steady, and uniform conduct in that arduous work, entitle you to the esteem of all British America, and will immortalize

you in the annals of your country. We heartily concur in your resolutions, and shall, in every instance, strictly and invariably adhere thereto.

We assure you, Gentlemen, and all our countrymen, that we are a people whose hearts overflow with love and duty to our lawful sovereign George III. whose illustrious house, for several successive reigns, have been the guardians of the civil and religious rights and liberties of British subjects, as settled at the glorious Revolution; that we are willing to risk our lives in the service of his Majesty, for the support of the Protestant religion, and the rights and liberties of his subjects, as they have been established by the compact, law, and ancient charters.

We are heartily grieved at the differences which now subsist between the parent state and the colonies, and most ardently wish to see harmony restored, on an equitable basis, and by the most lenient measures that can be devised by the heart of man.

Many of us, and our forefathers, left our native land, considering it as a kingdom subjected to inordinate power, and greatly abridged of its liberties. We crossed the Atlantick, and explored this then uncultivated wilderness, bordering on many nations of savages, and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first seating the country. These fatigue and dangers we patiently encountered, supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which had been granted to Virginians and were denied us in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity. But even to these remote regions the hand of unlimited and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature, and the rights of humanity, have vested us. We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own representatives; but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British parliament, or to the will of a corrupt Ministry.

We by no means desire to shake off our duty or allegiance to our lawful sovereign, but on the contrary shall ever glory in being loyal subjects of a Protestant prince, descended from such illustrious progenitors, so long as we can enjoy the free exercise of our religion, as Protestants, and our liberties and properties, as British subjects.

But if no pacifick measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies will attempt to dragoon us out of these inestimable privileges which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare, that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth, but at the expense of our lives.

These are our real, though unpolished sentiments, of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live and die.

We are, Gentlemen, with the most perfect esteem and regard, your most obedient servants.

Appendix B

The Pittsylvania Resolves¹³²

THE freeholders of the county of Pittsylvania, being duly summoned, convened at the courthouse of the said county, on Thursday the 26th of January, 1775, and then proceeded to make the choice of a committee, agreeable to the direction of the General Congress, for enforcing and putting into execution the association, when the following Gentlemen were chosen members for the same, VIZ.

Abraham Shelton, Robert Williams, Thomas Dilliard, William Todd, Abraham Penn, Peter Perkins, Benjamin Lankford, Thomas Terry, Arthur Hopkins, Hugh Challus, Charles L. Adams, James Walker, William Peters Martin, Daniel Shelton, William Ward, Edmund Taylor, Isaac Clements, Gabriel Shelton, Peter Wilson, William Short, Henry Conway, John Payne, sen. Joseph Roberts, William Witcher, Henry Williams, John Salmon, Rev. Lewis Gwillam, Richard Walden, Peter Saunders, John Wilson, and Crispin Shelton.

The committee then proceeded to make choice of Robert Williams for their Chairman, and William Peters Martin their Clerk.

During the time of choosing the said committee, the utmost good order and harmony was observed, and all the inhabitants of the county then present (which was very numerous) seemed determined and resolute in defending their liberties and properties, at the risk of their lives, and, if required, to die by their fellow sufferers (the Bostonians) whose cause they consider as their own; and, it being mentioned in committee, that their county had never contributed their proportionable part towards defraying the expenses of the Delegates, who attended on our behalf at the General

Congress, that sum was immediately and cheerfully raised and deposited in the hands of Peter Perkins and Benjamin Lankford, Esquires, the Representatives for the said county, to be transmitted by them, to whom it ought to have been paid; after which the committee rose, and several loyal and patriotick toasts were drank, and the company dispersed, well pleased with the behaviour of those people they had put their confidence in.

Ordered, that a copy of the above proceedings be inserted in the Virginia News-papers.

WILLIAM PETERS MARTIN, Clk. of the committee.

Appendix C

The Augusta Resolves¹³³

Mr. PINKNEY,

YOU are requested to give the following a place in your paper as soon as you possibly can: In doing do you will oblige your customers in Augusta county.

AFTER due notice given to the freeholders of Augusta county, to meet in Staunton for the purpose of electing delegates to represent them in colony convention at the town of Richmond, on the 20th day of this instant March, the freeholders of said county thought proper to refer the choice of their delegates to the judgment of the committee, who, thus authorized by the general voice of the people, met at the courthouse on the 22d day of February, and unanimously chose Mr. Thomas Lewis and captain Samuel M'Dowell to represent them in the ensuing convention.

Instructions were then ordered to be drawn up by the reverend Alexander Balmain, Mr. Sampson Matthews, captain Alexander M'Clenachan, Mr. Michael Bowyer, Mr. William Lewis, and captain George Matthews, or any three of them, and delivered to the delegates thus chosen, which are as follows:

To Mr. Thomas Lewis and captain Samuel M'Dowell.

The committee of Augusta county, pursuant to the trust reposed in them by the freeholders of the same, have chosen you to represent them in a colony convention, proposed to be held in Richmond on the 20th of March instant. They desire that you may consider the people of Augusta county as impressed with just sentiments of loyalty and allegiance to his majesty king George, whose title to the imperial crown of Great Britain

rests on no other foundation than the liberty, and whose glory is inseparable from the happiness, of all his subjects. We have also a respect for the parent state, which respect is founded on religion, on law, and the genuine principles of the constitution. On these principles do we earnestly desire to see harmony and a good understanding restored between Great Britain and America. Many of us and our forefathers left their native land, explored this once savage wilderness, to enjoy the free exercise of the rights of conscience, and of human nature: These rights we are fully resolved, with our lives and fortunes, inviolably to preserve, nor will we surrender such inestimable blessings, the purchase of toil and danger, to any minister, to any parliament, or any body of men upon earth, by whom we are not represented, and in whose decisions therefore we have no voice.

We desire you to tender, in the most respectful terms, our grateful acknowledgements to the late worthy delegates of this colony, for their wise, spirited, and patriotic exertions, in the general congress, and to assure them that we will uniformly and religiously adhere to their resolutions, prudently and generously formed for their country's good.

Fully convinced that the safety and happiness of America depend, next to the blessing of Almighty God, on the unanimity and wisdom of her councils, we doubt not you will, on your part, comply with the recommendations of the late continental congress, appointing delegates from this colony to meet in Philadelphia on the 10th of May next, unless American grievances be redressed before that time; and as we are determined to maintain unimpaired that liberty which is the gift of Heaven to the subjects of Britain's empire, we will most cordially join our countrymen in such measures as may be deemed wise and necessary to secure and perpetuate the ancient, just, and legal rights of this colony, and all British America.

As the state of this colony greatly demands that manufactures should be encouraged by every possible means, we desire you to use your endeavours that bounties may be proposed by the convention for the making of salt, steel, wool cards, paper, and gunpowder, and that, in the mean time, a supply of ammunition be provided for the militia of this colony. We entirely agree in opinion with the gentlemen of Fairfax county, that a well regulated militia is the natural strength, and staple security, of a free government, and therefore wish it might be recommended by the convention to the officers and men of each county in Virginia to make themselves masters of the military exercise, published by order of his majesty in the year 1764.

Placing our ultimate trust on the supreme disposer of every event, without whose gracious interposition the wisest schemes may fail of success, we desire you to move the convention, that some day, which may appear to them most convenient, be set apart for imploring the blessings of Almighty God on such plans as human wisdom and integrity may think necessary to adopt for preserving AMERICA happy, virtuous, and free.

Appendix D

The Botetourt Resolutions¹³⁴

[Published 11 March 1775]

To Col. ANDREW LEWIS and Mr. JOHN BOWYER.

GENTLEMEN,

FOR your past service, you have our thanks, and we presume it is all the reward you desire. And as we have again committed you the greatest trust we can confer (that of appearing for us in the great Council of the colony) we think it expedient ye hear our sentiments at this important juncture. And first, we require you to represent us with hearts replete with the most grateful and loyal veneration for the race of Brunswick, for they have been truly our fathers; and at the same time the most dutiful affection for our Sovereign, of whose honest heart we cannot entertain any diffidence; but sorry we are to add, that in his councils we can no longer confide. A set of miscreants, unworthy to administer the laws of Britain's empire, have been permitted impiously to sway. How unjustly, cruelly, and tyrannically, they have invaded our rights, we need not now put you in mind. We only say, and we assert it with pride, that the subjects of Britain are ONE; and when the honest man of Boston, who has broke no law, has his property wrested from him, the hunter on the Allegany must take the alarm, and, as a FREEMAN of America, he will fly to his Representatives and thus instruct them: Gentlemen, my gun, my tomahawk, my life, I desire you to tender to the honour of my King and country; but my LIBERTY, to range these woods on the same terms my father has done is not mine to give up; it was not purchased by me, and purchased it was; it is entailed on my son, and the tenure is sacred. Watch over it, Gentlemen, for to him it must descend unviolated, if my arm can defend it; but if not, if wicked power is permitted to prevail against me, the original purchase was blood, and mine shall seal the surrender .

That our countrymen, and the world, may know our disposition, we choose that this be published. And we have one request to add, that is, that the SONS of WORTH and FREEDOM who appeared for us at Philadelphia will accept our most ardent, grateful acknowledgments; and we hereby pledge them our faith, that we will religiously observe their resolutions, and obey their instructions, in contempt of our power, and temporary interest; and should the measures they have wisely calculated for our relief fail, we will stand prepared for every Contingency. We are Gentlemen, your dutiful, &c.

The FREEHOLDERS of BOTETOURT.

Appendix E

The Fort Gower Resolves¹³⁵

At a Meeting of the Officers under the Command of his Excellency the Right Honourable the EARL of DUNMORE, convened at Fort Gower*, November 5, 1774, for the Purpose of considering the Grievances of BRITISH AMERICA, an Officer present addressed the Meeting in the following Words:

* Situated the Junction of the Ohio and Hockhocking Rivers, 200 miles¹³⁶ below Fort Dunmore.

GENTLEMEN:

“**H**aving now concluded the Campaign, by the Assistance of Providence, with Honour and Advantage to the Colony, and ourselves, it only remains that we should give our Country the strongest Assurance that we are ready, at all Times, to the utmost of our Power, to maintain and defend her just Rights and Privileges. We have lived about three Months in the Woods, without any intelligence from Boston, or from the Delegates at Philadelphia. It is possible, from the groundless Reports of designing Men, that our Countrymen may be jealous of the Use such a Body would make of Arms in their Hands at this critical Juncture. That we a[r]e a respectable Body is certain, when it is considered that we can live Weeks without Bread or Salt, that we can sleep in the open Air without any Covering but that of the Canopy of Heaven, and that our Men can march and shoot with any in the known World. Blessed with these Talents, let us solemnly engage to one another, and our Country in particular, that we will use them to no Purpose but for the Honour and Advantage of America in general, and of Vir-

ginia in particular. It behooves us then, for the Satisfaction of our Country, that we should give them our real Sentiments, by Way of Resolves, at this very alarming Crisis.”

Whereupon the Meeting made Choice of a Committee to draw up and prepare Resolves for their Consideration, who immediately withdrew; and after some Time spent therein, reported, that they had agreed to, and prepared the following Resolves, which were read, maturely considered, and agreed to *nemine contradicente*, by the Meeting, and ordered to be published in the Virginia Gazette:

Resolved, that we will bear the most faithful Allegiance to his Majesty King George III, whilst his Majesty delights to reign over a brave and free People; that we will, at the Expense of Life, and every Thing dear and valuable, exert ourselves in Support of the Honour of his Crown and the Dignity of the British empire. But as the Love of Liberty, and Attachment to the real Interests and just Rights of America outweigh every other Consideration, we resolve that we will exert every Power within us for the Defence of American Liberty, and for the Support of her just Rights and Privileges; not in any precipitate, riotous, or tumultuous Manner, but when regularly called forth by the unanimous Voice of our Countrymen.

Resolved, that we entertain the greatest Respect for his Excellency the Right Honourable Lord Dunmore, who commanded the Expedition against the Shawanese; and who, we are confident, underwent the great Fatigue of this singular Campaign from no other Motive than the true Interest of this Country.

Signed by Order, and in Behalf of the whole corps,
BENJAMIN ASHBY, Clerk.

Endnotes

1. Thad Tate, “The Fincastle Resolutions: Southwest Virginia’s Commitment,” *Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society* (1975), 9: 19–29. The text of an address given on 19 January 1975 at Fort Chiswell High School in honor of the 200th anniversary of the signing.
2. Over the years amateur historians and journalists in southwest Virginia have made many extravagant and totally unrealistic claims for the importance of the Fincastle Resolutions. Here are just two examples (out of dozens, maybe hundreds): “Magna charta [sic] in the Wilderness,” Lula Porterfield Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia* (Pulaski: Published by the author, 1975), 77; and “Wythe County In Virginia Birthplace, Independence,” the headline to an article by Larry Schoenfeld, 19 June 1967, *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*.

3. Oversimplifying slightly: In 1735 Augusta County, Virginia, was created as the land extending to the Pacific Ocean lying west of a line more-or-less paralleling and running a few tens of miles east of modern-day Interstate Highway 81. In 1770, a line running northwesterly from present Amherst County to Detroit divided Augusta into a much reduced Augusta to the north and the newly created Botetourt to the south. In 1772, Fincastle County was created from the large, western part of Botetourt County. Short-lived Fincastle County lasted to the end of 1776, when it was divided into Washington, Montgomery, and Kentucky counties — with the latter eventually becoming the state of Kentucky. See: Martha W. Hiden, *How Justice Grew — Virginia Counties: An Abstract of their Formation* (Williamsburg: The Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation, 1957). The men who promulgated the Fincastle Resolutions all lived in the region we today broadly call Southwest Virginia.
4. The Virginia county committees described in this section were not contemporaneously called “committees of safety.” However some authors so-refer to them. See: Richard Barksdale Harwell, *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle: Proceedings of the County Committees, 1774–1776* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1956), 24. Brent Tarter (personal communication) points out that the habit of referring to the committees and sometimes the 1774 meetings as committees of safety is a convention that may date back to H. R. McIlwaine’s publication of the records of the Cumberland and Isle of Wight County committee journals in 1919, when in the title to that pamphlet he called them committees of safety. That is an anachronistic and somewhat inaccurate style. It is more accurate to refer to the committees formed late in 1774 and in 1775 as county committees and not as county committees of safety.
5. Author unknown, “Proceedings of the Fincastle County Committee, January 20, 1775,” *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 10 February 1775, 3. On line at Colonial Williamsburg at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
6. Pittsylvania was not literally on the frontier in 1774, but it was one of Virginia’s westernmost counties and its resolutions certainly showed a frontier spirit.
7. Richard O. Curry, “Lord Dunmore and the West: A Re-evaluation,” *West Virginia History* (1958), 19: 231–42. “‘Land hunger’ can scarcely be over emphasized when explaining the grievances of Virginians against George III. As the cultivation of tobacco was the mainstay in the economic life of the colony, the planter aristocracy turned to land speculation as a means of extracting themselves from an overwhelming burden of indebtedness to British merchants,” 232. People of the lower classes acquired western land more directly: by squatting.
8. Daniel M. Friedenberg, *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Land: The Plunder of Early America* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1992), passim.
9. William Waller Hening, “An act for dividing the county of Botetourt into two distinct counties,” in *The Statutes at large: being a collection of all the laws of Virginia*, volume 8, 1764–1773 (Charlottesville: Jamestown Foundation and the University of Virginia, 1969 [1823]), 600–1.
10. William Waller Hening, “An act for dividing the county of Fincastle into three distinct counties, and the parish of Botetourt into four distinct parishes,” in *The*

- Statutes at large: being a collection of all the laws of Virginia*, vol. 9, 1775–1778 (Charlottesville: Jamestown Foundation and the University of Virginia, 1969 [1823]), 257–61.
11. Hiden, *How Justice Grew*, passim. See also Betty E. Spillman, Shirley P. Thomas, and Ann Brush Miller, *Fincastle County Road Orders, 1773–1776* (Richmond: Virginia Transportation Research Council, May 2007). On line at: http://www.virginiadot.org/vtrc/main/online_reports/pdf/07-r32.pdf.
 12. William J. Van Schreeven, Robert L. Scribner, and Brent Tarter, compilers and editors, *Revolutionary Virginia, the Road to Independence*, in seven volumes (Charlottesville: Published for Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission by the University Press of Virginia, 1973–1985), 1: 89–92.
 13. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 93–100.
 14. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 101–2.
 15. Harwell, *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle*, 9.
 16. Charles Washington Coleman, “The County Committees of 1774–’75 in Virginia,” *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* (1896), 5: 94–106; “The County Committees of 1774–’75 in Virginia: II,” *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* (1897), 5: 245–55.
 17. Larry Bowman, “The Virginia County Committees of Safety, 1774–1776,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (1971), 79: 322–37.
 18. Timothy Hack. “Shaping a Revolution: The County Committees in Virginia, 1774–1776.” A paper written for the James Madison University course HIST 273, 2002. On line at <http://www.jmu.edu/writeon/2002/hack2002.htm>. Examined 7/14/09.
 19. Peter Force, ed., *American Archives* (series 4, six volumes and series 5, three volumes), (Washington, D.C.: By the editor, 1837–1853), Series 4, 1: 1061–63. On line at <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/amarch> as document S4-V1-p1061–1063.
 20. Several publishers issued *Virginia Gazettes*. It’s a fairly complicated story. See the web site <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
 21. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 111–68.
 22. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 109.
 23. Jeff Broadwater, *George Mason, Forgotten Founder* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 67, says that of the 31 documents listed in Table 1, “...the Fairfax Resolves were the most detailed, the most influential, and the most radical. ... Mason had reduced to writing ideas that were commonplace among colonial radicals, and somehow managed to do it in a way that was acceptable to most conservatives.”
 24. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 109.
 25. Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*. Rev. Va. 1: 240–56. Robert L. Scribner, editor of *Revolutionary Virginia* 2, argued that the pamphlet was printed at Rind’s press on Monday 8 August 1774, 242.
 26. *Revolutionary Virginia*, 1: 109.
 27. Hiden, *How Justice Grew*, chart 2, 83. At this date Pittsylvania County encompassed the territory occupied by the modern Virginia counties of Patrick, Henry, and present Pittsylvania.
 28. Larrie L. Bucklen and Mary Kegley Bucklen, *County Courthouses of Virginia Old and New* (Wytheville: Kegley Books, 1988). These authors say that the Pittsylvania

- courthouse was at Callands at the time of their resolves. Pittsylvania was divided in 1776 and the courthouse moved to present Chatham.
29. *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 11 February 1775, supplement, 2, column 3.
 30. Hiden, *How Justice Grew*. See chart 10 on page 86. At this date Augusta County encompassed the territory occupied by the modern Virginia counties of Alleghany, Bath, Page, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham, present Augusta, and twenty-seven West Virginia counties, the modern states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, etc., and part of Pennsylvania.
 31. Hiden, *How Justice Grew*. See chart 11 on page 87. At this date Botetourt County encompassed the territory occupied by the modern Virginia counties of Craig, Roanoke, and present Botetourt and twelve counties of West Virginia.
 32. The date the Botetourt committee met is not recorded, but was doubtless 2–3 weeks before its instructions were published.
 33. John R. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754–1775* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1944); David H. Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740–62* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962); Harry M. Ward, *Major General Adam Stephen and the Cause of American Liberty* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989); John Oliphant, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756–63* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001); Matthew Ward, *Breaking The Backcountry: Seven Years War in Virginia and Pennsylvania 1754–1765* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2003).
 34. Jim Glanville and John M. Preston IV, “Aspenvale Cemetery and Its Place in the History of Southwest Virginia,” *The Smithfield Review* (2009), 13: 87–136.
 35. Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York: Appleton-Century Company, Incorporated, for the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, University of Virginia, 1937).
 36. Jack M. Sosin, *The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763–1783* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967; paperback reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974).
 37. Albert H. Tillson, *Gentry and Common Folk: Political Culture on a Virginia Frontier 1740–1789* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1991).
 38. Patricia Givens Johnson, *William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots* (Blacksburg, Va.: Walpa Publishing, 1976).
 39. Rhys Isaac, “Dramatizing the Ideology of Revolution: Popular Mobilization in Virginia, 1774 to 1776,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser. (1976), 33: 357–85.
 40. B. Scott Crawford, “A Frontier of Fear: Terrorism and Social Tension along Virginia’s Western Waters, 1742–1775,” *West Virginia History*, New Series (2008), 2: 1–29.
 41. Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746–1786, Washington County, 1777–1870* (Self published, Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Company, 1903).

42. Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769–1800* (Abingdon, Va.: Self published, 1929).
43. Frederick B. Kegley, *Kegley's Virginia Frontier* (Roanoke: Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938).
44. Johnson, *William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots*.
45. Mary B. Kegley, *Finding Their Way from the Great Road to the Wilderness Road, 1745–1796* (Wytheville: Kegley Books, 2008).
46. Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1999).
47. Jack P. Greene, "'Virtus et Libertas': Political Culture, Social Change, and the Origins of the American Revolution in Virginia, 1763–1766," in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, ed. Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 55–108.
48. Max Dixon, *The Wataugans* (Johnson City, Tenn.: Overmountain Press, 1989).
49. Louise Phelps Kellogg, *Frontier Retreat on the Upper Ohio, 1779–1781* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1917); Brenda Lynn Williams, "Thorns in the Side of Patriotism: Tory Activity in Southwest Virginia, 1776–1782," MS thesis (Virginia Tech, 1984); Emory Evans, "Trouble in the Backcountry: Disaffection in Southwest Virginia during the American Revolution," in *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate and Peter Albert (Charlottesville, Published for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1985), 179–212; Tillson, *Gentry and Common Folk*.
50. Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia*, 146.
51. William Preston, "Volunteers for expedition called Out," A circular letter written from Smithfield 20 July 1774, 91–3, in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, *Documentary History of Dunmore's War, Compiled from the Draper Manuscripts* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), Draper manuscript 3QQ139. "This letter is a rough copy, made by some inept Scribe, of the circular letter which Preston undoubtedly sent out to the captains of militia, and through them to the people in general The copy terminates abruptly." (Thwaites and Kellogg).
52. Alden, *John Stuart*, 334.
53. Lord Dunmore, "Affairs in Virginia: The Indian Expedition," Dunmore's official report to Lord Dartmouth, December 1774, Draper mss., 15J4-28, in Thwaites and Kellogg, *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, 268–395.
54. Sources for Dunmore's War include Virgil Anson Lewis' *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant: ... The Chief Event of Lord Dunmore's War* (Charleston, W.Va.: The Tribune Printing Company, 1908); Thwaites and Kellogg, *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, Elizabeth Van Wrick, "Dunmore — Virginia's Last Royal Governor," *West Virginia History* (1947), 8: 237–82; Richard Orr Curry, "Lord Dunmore and the West"; Howard Wilson McKnight, *Great Valley Patriots: Western Virginia in the*

- Struggle for Liberty* (Verona: McClure Press, 1976); Patricia Givens Johnson, *General Andrew Lewis of Roanoke and Greenbrier* (Blacksburg, Va.: Walpa Publishing, 2nd. ed. 1994), 165–85; Warren Skidmore and Donna Kaminsky, *Lord Dunmore's Little War of 1774* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 2002).
55. Despite the increasingly revolutionary situation in Williamsburg, Dunmore left on July 10 and did not return until December 4.
56. Nicholas Cresswell wrote that in December 1774 he “Saw four Indian Chiefs of the Shawnee Nation, who have been at War with the Virginians this summer, but have made peace with them, and they are sending these people to Williamsburg as hostages. They are tall, manly, well-shaped men, of a Copper colour with black hair, quick piercing eyes; and good features. They have rings of silver in their nose and bobs to them which hang over their upper lip. Their ears are cut from the tips two thirds of the way round and the piece extended with brass wire till it touches their shoulders, in this part they hang a thin silver plate, wrought in flourishes about three inches diameter, with plates of silver round their arms and in the hair, which is all cut off except a long lock on the top of the head. They are in white men's dress, except breeches which they refuse to wear, instead of which they have a girdle round them with a piece of cloth drawn through their legs and turned over the girdle, and appears like a short apron before and behind. All the hair is pulled from their eyebrows and eyelashes and their faces painted in different parts with Vermilion. They walk remarkably straight and cut a grotesque appearance in this mixed dress.” *Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774–1777* (New York: Dial Press, 1924), 49–50.
57. Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 137, comments: “Throughout the conflicts of the 1740s and 1760s the Ohio Indians had proved remarkably resilient in self-defense, but Dunmore's War initiated a long downward slide of Native American power in the American interior, which would culminate in the destruction of Indian society there in less than a half century.”
58. Holton, *Forced Founders*, 33–4.
59. W. Campbell, Christian, Crockett, Ingles, Russell, and Shelby.
60. After Daniel Boone returned to Southwest Virginia from survey work in Kentucky in the summer of 1774, he started off to join the forces that had already left on Dunmore's campaign. However, William Russell ordered Boone back to Castlewood to defend the Clinch settlements. The miserable conditions and Indian attacks along the Clinch that fall, and the role of Boone and his wife Rebecca, have been recounted in John Mack Faragher's *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 102–6.
61. *Revolutionary Virginia*, “An Introductory Note,” by the editors, 2:107–8.
62. William Crawford, “Letter to George Washington,” from Stewart's Crossing, 14 November 1774, in *The Washington-Crawford letters: Being the correspondence between George Washington and William Crawford, from 1767 to 1781, concerning western lands*, ed. Consul Willshire Butterfield (Cincinnati: R. Clarke & Co., 1877), 55–7. Crawford tells that he has returned from Dunmore's War and that he built a house on Washington's land across the Ohio River from Fort Gower.

63. Benjamin Ashby, clerk, "At a Meeting of the officers Under the Command of his Excellency...", *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 22 December 1774, 1-2 (Appendix E).
64. North Callahan, *Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 34. The Continental Congress had on 18 September endorsed and directed the printing of the radical resolves adopted by the delegates of Suffolk County, Massachusetts: *Revolutionary Virginia*, 2: xxii.
65. Margaret Campbell Pilcher, "The Spirit of Independence Shown Among the Pioneers of Western Virginia and the Carolinas in 1774," *The American Monthly Magazine of the National Society of the Daughters of the Revolution* (1895), 12: 124-5.
66. Agnes Graham Sanders Riley, "Brigadier General William Campbell 1745-1781," *Historical Society of Washington County, Bulletin, Series II No. 22* (1985), 1-32, page 8.
67. John E. Robbins, "The Fort Gower Resolves November 5, 1774," in *Ohio in the American Revolution: A Conference to Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Ft. Gower Resolves*, ed. Thomas H. Smith (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1976), 21-6.
68. The Marquis of Rockingham et al., "Debate on the Bill to Restrain Trade," London House of Lords, 16 March 1775. During this debate the Fort Gower Resolves were read by Lord Rockingham. Reproduced in *American Archives*, ed. Peter Force (series 4, six volumes and series 5, three volumes) (Washington, D.C.: By the editor, 1837-1853,) series 4, 1: 1670-87.
69. William Christian, Letter to William Preston at Botetourt, from Smithfield, Tuesday 8 November 1774, in *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, ed. Thwaites and Kellogg, 301-7. Draper manuscript 3QQ130.
70. William Russell, Letter to William Preston from Point Pleasant, 12 November 1774, in *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, ed. Thwaites and Kellogg, 308-11. Draper manuscript 3QQ132.
71. Lyman C. Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain and the Events Which Led to It* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983 [1881]). Draper states that William Campbell was "...no doubt among the number at Fort Gower 'who made the declaration'," 381-2.
72. Agnes Graham Sanders Riley, "Brigadier General William Campbell," 1985. Riley states flatly that William Campbell "... had approved the Fort Gower statement in the Fall of 1774," 9.
73. Letter from Colonel Adam Stephen to Richard Henry Lee, "Ordered to the Ohio, by Lord Dunmore, which..." Reproduced in *American Archives*, ed. Force, series 4, 1: 3.
74. Harry M. Ward, *Major General Adam Stephen and the Cause of American Liberty* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 110-2.
75. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 137.
76. Sarah Shelton Henry, "Letter to Mrs. William Fleming," written from Hanover to Fincastle, 15 October 1774, in *Patrick Henry, Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, ed. William Wirt Henry (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 1: 249.

77. Frances Erle Ford, "William Christian: a Frontiersman of the Valley of Virginia," Master's thesis (University of Virginia, 1934), 7.
78. William Wirt Henry, *Patrick Henry, Life, Correspondence and Speeches* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 1: 122.
79. Robert Douthat Meade, *Patrick Henry: Practical Revolutionary* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969), 229.
80. Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish settlement in Virginia, extracted from the original court records of Augusta County 1745–1800* (Rosslyn, Va.: Mary S. Lockwood/Commonwealth Printing Co., 1912), 3: 462. The mortgaging of six plots by Shelton to Henry (technically Shelton signed over to Henry an "equity in redemption" — Mary Kegley, personal communication) totaling about 5,000 acres was recorded 10 November 1767 in Augusta County deed book Number 14.
81. The exact dates of this trip are not known.
82. Meade, *Patrick Henry* (1969), 230–1. Other modern-day places Henry and his party apparently visited were Roanoke, Dunkard's Bottom, and Seven Mile Ford.
83. Joseph A. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia* (Richmond: Self published, 1886), 130.
84. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta*, 131.
85. Meade, *Patrick Henry*, 12.
86. William Campbell did not meet his future wife until late 1775 when he was posted to Williamsburg under the command of William Christian. Thus, he would have had no reason to travel to Hanover County in December 1774.
87. Frequently cited with the variant spelling Manahaim.
88. Now inundated under the waters of Claytor Lake.
89. Sarah Shelton Henry, "Letter to Mrs. William Fleming."
90. Anne Christian, "Letters to Ann Fleming," 3 and 15 October 1775. Quoted by Johnson, *William Preston*, 142. Because of William Christian's absence on the frontier, Anne Christian moved her family from her home, Mahanaim, to the Henry family home, Scotchtown, in Hanover County. She was there as early as 3 October and wrote to her sister-in-law that Patrick Henry had not yet returned from Philadelphia.
91. Meade, *Patrick Henry*, 13.
92. Mary Kegley, "The Resolutions: Who the 15 Signers Were," *Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society* (1975), 9: 32–6.
93. Robert L Kincaid, "Colonel Arthur Campbell—Frontier Leader & Patriot," *Historical Society of Washington County Bulletin*, Series II, No. 1 (1965): 1–18; Hartwell L. Quinn, *Arthur Campbell: Pioneer and Patriot of the "Old Southwest"* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland Publishers, 1990), a book length biography; Peter J. Kastor, "Arthur Campbell," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, vol. 2, ed. Sara B. Bearss et al. (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2002), 554–6.
94. Lyman C. Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain and the Events Which Led to It* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983 [1881]); E. T. Crowson, "Colonel William Campbell and the Battle of King's Mountain," *Virginia Cavalcade* (1981), 30: 22–9; Agnes Graham Sanders Riley, "Brigadier General William Campbell"; Paul David Nelson, "William Campbell,"

- Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, ed. Sara B. Bearss et al. (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2002), 2: 583–5.
95. Ford, “William Christian: a Frontiersman of the Valley of Virginia”; Edward Sayle, “The Christians, Part 1,” *Isle of Man Family History Society Journal* (1982), vol. 4; Ira Redmond Roop, “The life story of Colonel William Christian,” *Montgomery News Messenger*, 1 March 1939; Mary B. Kegley and F. B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters: The New River of Virginia in Pioneer Days, 1745–1800* (Orange, Va.: Green Publishers, 1980), 1: 334–42; Gail S. Terry, “William Christian,” *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, 3: 234–5.
96. For example, this is currently stated in the online encyclopedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiansburg,_Virginia. Ford (*William Christian: a Frontiersman*, 1934) asserts the town was named after his father Israel Christian, and her status as a student of Thomas Perkins Abernethy gives her some credibility.
97. Mary B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, vol. 3: *The New River of Virginia in Pioneer Days, 1745–1805* (in 2 parts) (Wytheville: Kegley Books, 1995), 253–60 and 616–36; Marianne E. Julienne, “Walter Crockett,” *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, 3: 563–5.
98. Mrs. James H. Mongle, “Sketch of the Rev. Charles Cummings,” *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia*, Bulletin 5 (1940): 39–43; Douglas S. Brown, “Charles Cummings: The Fighting Parson of Southwest Virginia,” *Virginia Cavalcade* (1979), 28: 138–42; Monica Nadar, “Charles Cummings,” *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, 3: 600–1.
99. Lyman C. Draper, *King’s Mountain and Its Heroes*, 402–3.
100. Kegley and Kegley, *Early Adventurers*, 1: 352–9.
101. Surprisingly, Thomas Madison has left a very slight documentary record. There is a short sketch of him in Robert Douthat Stoner’s *A Seed-bed of the Republic – A Study of the Pioneers of the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia* (Roanoke: Roanoke Historical Society, 1962), 305–7. Stoner says that “with the exception of one short period” Madison was a lifelong resident of Botetourt County; however, Stoner cited no authority for this statement. That Madison was admitted to the Fincastle bar in 1774 is reported by Summers, *History of Washington County* (1903), 132. He was possibly living at the lead mines in 1775 (M. Kegley, personal communication).
102. Rev. Robert Gray, *The McGavock Family: A Genealogical History of James McGavock and His Descendants from 1760 to 1903* (Richmond: W. E. Jones, 1903); Kegley, *Early Adventurers*, 3: 698–723.
103. Agnes Graham Sanders Riley, “John Montgomery 1717–1802,” *Historical Society of Washington County Bulletin*, Series 2, No. 5 (1967), 5–14; Kegley, *Early Adventurers*, 3: 723–6.
104. The literature dealing with William Preston is enormous. The two largest biographical works (both containing hundreds of citations) are: Patricia Givens Johnson, *William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots*, and Richard Charles Osborn, *William Preston of Virginia, 1727–1783: The Making of a Frontier Elite*, Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Maryland, College Park, 1990).

105. Anna Des Cognets, *William Russell and His Descendants* (Lexington: Printed for the family, by Samuel. F. Wilson, 1884); Mary Katherine Thorp, “William Russell — A Revolutionary Patriot of the Clinch Valley,” Masters thesis (University of Virginia, 1934); Mary Kegley, “William Russell,” unpublished manuscript, 1975.
106. Thwaites and Kellogg, *Documentary History of Dunmore’s War*, 48–9; see also Archibald Henderson, “Isaac Shelby: Revolutionary Patriot and Border Hero,” *The North Carolina Booklet* (1917), 16: 109–44.
107. Smith has been the subject of a book length biography: Walter T. Durham, *Daniel Smith: Frontier Statesman* (Gallatin, Tenn.: Sumner County Library Board, 1976).
108. Kegley and Kegley, *Early Adventurers*, 1: 369–70.
109. Lawrence J. Fleenor and Dale Carter, *The Forts of the Holston Militia* (Big Stone Gap: Lawrence J. Fleenor, 2004). This book describes thirty-six forts, a number that itself testifies to the extent of settler-Indian conflict in Southwest Virginia during the eighteenth century.
110. Thomas L. Preston, *Historical Sketches and Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* (Richmond: R. F. Johnson, 1900). Preston states on page 23: “Fort Chiswell has other claims to historical association. It was the meeting place, in all probability, of that band of ‘West Augusta’ patriots who were the first to resolve ‘to resist the aggressions of England by force’.”
111. Johnson, *William Preston*, 121.
112. Fort Chiswell was built during William Byrd III’s 1760–61 campaign against the Cherokees. For a history of the fort see Mary Kegley, “The Big Fort,” *Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society* (1978), 10: 1–28. The map on page 7 shows the exact location of Fort Chiswell in relation to the modern highways I-77 and I-81. Construction of an interstate highway interchange circa 1975 totally changed the land contours where the fort once stood.
113. Council of Virginia, Meeting of 17 October 1772, in *Executive Journals of the Councils of Colonial Virginia*, ed. Benjamin J. Hillman (20 June 1754 – 3 May 1775), (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), 6: 506–7.
114. Records of the first court of Fincastle County, 6 January 1773, order book number 1, page 5. Located in the court house of modern-day Montgomery County. See also page 3 in Betty E. Spillman et al., “Fincastle County Road Orders.”
115. William Preston, Letter to Col. William Byrd III, from Fincastle 14 May 1774, *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia 1684–1776*, ed. Marion Tinling, 792–3. Draper manuscript 3QQ24. Tells that complaints about the location of the Fincastle Court House are “pretty general among the people.” Preston writes: “The proposal of suffering the court house to be moved may be contrary to your private interest; but when the complaints of the people run high, ... would not be best to agree to a removal and have it placed as high in the country as possible [?]”
116. William Preston, Letter to Col. Edmund Pendleton, from Fincastle 14 May 1774. Draper manuscript 3QQ25 in Lyman Copeland Draper, Draper manuscript collection, 1727–1891, microfilm roll 110 (of 134). Preston “...asks that the petition of people on Holston be held over until the next assembly [because] the court-house [is] not centrally located.”

117. Edmund Pendleton, Letter to William Preston, place not stated, 4 June 1774, Draper manuscript 3QQ36. The relevant paragraph reads: "It gives me concern to find your Court House is so inconvenient. If it is not too much trouble shall be glad to receive the Plan you mention, which I will lay before Col. Byrd & endeavor to prevail on him to give up the Court House; For tho I would wish to serve [Jn.] Robinson's estate, I cannot consent to do it at the expense of so many people's convenience, especially an people amongst whom I have an interest, & whom I think it my duty to assist when in my power."
118. William Hendy Shepherd, "Colonel John Chiswell, Chiswell's Lead Mines, Fort Chiswell," Masters thesis (University of Virginia, 1936), 52. Mary Kegley doubts this claim (personal communication).
119. Shepherd, "Colonel John Chiswell."
120. Harwell, *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle*.
121. If Madison was living at the lead mines at the time of the signing, he would have been a sole exception. However, it is only conjecture that he was then living there.
122. William Calk, "The Journal of William Calk, from Prince William County, Va., to Boonesboro, Ky., from March 13, 1775, to May 2, 1775," in Thomas Speed, *The Wilderness Road* (Louisville, Ky.: J. P. Morton and Company, 1886), 32–8. On page 33 is: "Wedns 22nd [March 1775] We start early and git to foart Chissel whear we git some good loaf Bread and good whiskey."
123. John Adams, Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 24 August 1815, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1904), 4: 346–9.
124. William Cecil Pendleton, *History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia: 1748–1920* (Richmond: Self published, W. C. Hill Printing Company, 1920), 342.
125. Roop, "The life story of Colonel William Christian," 4.
126. Johnson, *William Preston*, 161. Also, Richard Osborne, while remarking that the authorship is unknown, points out in his Ph.D. dissertation available on line (<http://library.uncg.edu/ejournals/backcountry/Vol3No2/Osborn3.pdf>, 1) that the language of the Resolutions is reminiscent of that used by William Preston in a letter to Edmund Pendleton.
127. T. Preston, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, 23.
128. Summers, *Annals*, 203.
129. William Preston, three letters: "Extract of a letter from Colo. William Preston to the Earl of Dunmore" from Fincastle County dated 25 January 1775, Patricia Givens Johnson Papers 1920–1986, collection Number Ms88-007, box 2, folder 4b (Special Collections, Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University); "Letter to George Washington," written from a place not stated 27 January 1775, Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, *Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers, 1774–1775* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1902), 5: 88–9; "Letter to George Washington," written from Fincastle 31 January 1775, *Letters to Washington*, 89–91.

130. The five transcriptions in Appendices A-E have been matched to the original versions that were printed in the several issues of the *Virginia Gazette*. With the exception of replacing many long s's (that look like f's) with s's (for example, addrefed was replaced by addressed), the punctuation, spelling, and capitalization of the originals have been retained.
131. Author unknown, "Proceedings of the Fincastle County Committee, January 20, 1775," *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 10 February 1775, 3; no hand-written copy of the Fincastle Resolutions is known to have survived. Brent Tarter, personal communication, July 2009, so this citation is the authoritative source of the Fincastle Resolutions. On line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
132. William Peters Martin, clerk, "THE freeholders of the county of Pittsylvania ...," *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), supplement, Saturday, 11 February 1775; on line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
133. Author unknown, "Mr. PINKNEY," *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), 16 March 1775; on line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>. Van Schreeven et al. (*Revolutionary Virginia*, 2: 98), state that this document was adopted on Wednesday, 22 February 1775. The document as published by Pinkney is itself undated.
134. The Freeholders of Botetourt, "To Col. ANDREW LEWIS and Mr. JOHN BOWYER," *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), Saturday, 11 March 1775; on line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
135. Benjamin Ashby, clerk, "At a Meeting of the officers Under the Command of his Excellency the Right Honourable the EARL of DUNMORE...", *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), December 22, 1774, 1-2; on line at <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/BrowseVG.cfm>.
136. Actually closer to 120 miles.