

Northern Neck of Virginia

Historical Magazine

DECEMBER, 1966

VOL. XVI



NO. 1

Contents

Report of the President	1443
A Field Day in Northumberland	1445
George Eskridge of Westmoreland: His Age and Political Career	1451
Wilna	1468
Ducking Stool	1470
Williamson Family Records	1471
Big Day at Montross	1476
The Middleton Family Bible	1481
Tithable Persons in the Parishes of Christ Church and St. Mary's Chapel	1488
The Leedstown Resolutions	1491
Robert Carter of Nomini Hall	1507
Friend Horse	1540
Mrs. Thomas Lomax Hunter	1543
Some Historical Highlights of Colonial Stafford County	1545
Membership List	1567
In Memoriam	1578

Published Annually by
THE NORTHERN NECK of VIRGINIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MONTROSS, Westmoreland County, VIRGINIA

Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine
Vol XVI No. 1, December 1966

The Leedstown Resolutions

Edited by Dr. John Carter Matthews and Sarah deGraffenried Robertson

Editors' Note

During the spring and early summer of 1966 the Leedstown Resolutions By-Centennial Commission, created by the Board of Supervisors of Westmoreland County to make proper observances of the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Leedstown Resolutions on February 27, 1966, sponsored an essay contest to stimulate public interest and to effect a compilation of all known information relative to the circumstances attending the signing of the Leedstown Resolutions. Contest entrants were advised that one of the purposes of the contest was to obtain documented information from all available sources in order that the history of the Leedstown Resolutions might be recorded for posterity with the utmost obtainable accuracy and completeness.

The winning entry in the contest was submitted by Dr. John Carter Matthews, Professor of Colonial History at Towson College, Towson, Maryland. Dr. Matthews is a nationally recognized authority on Colonial Virginia History and is a member of this society.

Second place was awarded to Miss Sarah de Graffenried Robertson of Montross, Virginia, a student at Randolph-Macon Woman's College.

Both entries were deemed worthy of publication by Publications Committee even though each is in part repetitious of the other. The original entries have been slightly edited for publication but not, it is hoped, to their detriment.

Bibliographical Note

The Leedstown Resolutions were first published in *The Maryland Gazette*, edited in Annapolis by Jonas Green, on Thursday, March 27, 1766 under a date-line "Virginia, March 1, 1776." There is reason to believe that the account was sent to Green by Richard Henry Lee. (1)

The old *Virginia Gazette* of Purdie and Dixon, although it resumed publication on 7 March, did not publish the resolutions. That, together with the failure of Purdie and Dixon to publish the refusal, the previous September, of the Justices of Westmoreland County to act under the Stamp Act and the account of the hanging in effigy of Grenville and George Mercer at Westmoreland Court House, which Green carried in his issue of 17 October, may help account for the arrival of William Rind in Williamsburg to establish a new *Virginia Gazette* (and confuse historians ever since). Rind's lead story in his first edition, on 16 May, was the account of the Leeds Town Resolutions and the Tappahannock Demonstration, word for word as it had appeared in his patron Green's *Maryland Gazette* six weeks before. (2)

The next, and earliest secondary publication, was in the *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee* written by his grandson R. H. Lee and published at Philadelphia in 1925. This copy differs from that in the *Maryland Gazette* in that it does not include the account of "Ritchie's Matchless Impudence" and has a different introduction before "We who subscribe this Paper," which is:

Roused by danger, and alarmed at attempts foreign and domestic, to reduce the people of this country to a state of abject and detestable slavery, by destroying that free and happy constitution of government under which they have hitherto lived; we who have subscribed, etc.

There is evidence of editing here. Green apparently felt it necessary to omit the half paragraph above to make the account fit his front page, while either Lee or his publisher modernized spelling and punctuation. Incidentally, Lee, apparently unaware that Leeds Town was not in 1765 in Westmoreland County, titled the resolutions "Articles of association, by the citizens of Westmoreland, for the purpose of opposing the stamp act." (3)

In 1842 Charles Carter Lee submitted to the *Southern Literary Messenger* a copy of the resolutions which had been furnished him by Samuel J. Carr, then a resident of Baltimore. Carr had gotten the manuscript from the papers of Major Henry Lee, the last Lee to own Stratford, who died in Paris in 1837. The magazine published the resolutions as they had been written, but with modernized capitalizations, in 1842. This was the first publication of the resolutions which included the names of the signers. Carr turned the manuscript, which was in the handwriting of Richard Henry Lee, over to John Y. Mason who, in 1848, presented it to the Virginia Historical Society. It was printed in the *Virginia Historical Register* in 1849. (4)

The resolutions were again printed by John Pendleton Kennedy in 1907 as a part of his preface to *The Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia 1761-1765*. Kennedy copied from the *Virginia Historical Register*. (5)

In the last decade the resolutions have been printed twice, in both cases from the manuscript belonging to the Virginia Historical Society. In 1956 the Virginia State Library printed the *Proceedings of the Committees of Safety (1774-1776) of Westmoreland and Fincastle Counties*. Richard Barksdale Harwell, the editor, included the Leedstown Resolutions. The *Lee Chronicle*, written by Cazenove Lee and edited by Dorothy Mills Parker, includes not only a painting but useful facsimiles of the manuscript. (6)

Why the Leedstown Resolutions Were Necessary

Opposition to the Stamp Act in Virginia had started with the action of the Assembly in the fall of 1764 when that body adopted a Petition to the King, a Memorial to the Lords, and a Remonstrance to the Commons. These being to no avail, there followed the resolutions introduced by Patrick Henry in May of 1765. (7)

The Stamp Act was to go into effect on the first of November 1765. On the twenty-fourth of September the Justices of Westmoreland County informed Governor Fauquier that they would refuse to serve after the Act went into force. Other courts followed suit, and since he couldn't replace the justices, Fauquier had to accept the closing of the county courts. After Mercer, the Stamp Distributor for Virginia, was forced to

agree not to act at Williamsburg on the thirty-first of October, the General Court, for lack of stamps, adjourned until the tenth of April 1766. (8)

With the courts closed for civil matters (criminal cases did not require stamps), and the newspapers suspended (although the *Virginia Gazette* did “beat the devil ‘round the stump” by putting out a “supplement” covering Mercer’s reception as an addition to its issue of October 25) the only situation in which stamps were likely to be used was shipping.

The few ships leaving Virginia in November were given temporary certificates that stamped paper was not available for clearance papers, but as the main shipping season approached with the early spring of 1766, rumors were rife that ships without clearance on stamped paper were being seized by customs authorities. Consequently when Archibald Ritchie, a prominent merchant of Essex County announced at Richmond Court that he had a cargo of grain destined for the West Indies which he intended to clear on stamped paper, unless others were willing to take it off his hands at cost, which he said was &2800, the situation was serious. How serious can be judged from the fact that eight years later in 1774, the Virginians at the First Continental Congress had to insist that the Continental Association which barred imports from England after the first of November 1774 should not affect exports until after the first of August 1775. (9)

Ritchie had said that he knew where to get stamped paper, even though Mercer had promised not to act and gone back to England. What was not generally known was that Mercer had given his brother a power of attorney to act for him and placed the stamped paper he had brought but said he did not have, on board *HMS Rainbow*. His Majesty’s Sloop *Hawke* had arrived at Annapolis with stamps during December. Stamps, then were available. (10)

Ritchie had to be stopped, and buying his cargo at his price was manifestly impractical. The answer was the Leeds Town Resolutions and what followed the next day at Tappahannock.

Planning the Leeds Town Meeting

Ritchie’s announcement of his plans to procure stamped paper and clear his &2800 cargo thereon created a stir. Within a few days Richard Henry Lee heard about it and started action. On Friday the ninth of February he wrote to Samuel Washington. On Thursday the twenty-second Washington replied acknowledging Lee’s letter of the ninth and stating that many of his neighbors were “ready at a moment’s Warning to assist in anything Destructive to him [Ritchie] or his Intentions” and asking where and when to assemble.(11)

In the meantime Lee had written to his older brother Thomas Ludwell Lee who lived at Bellview on Potomac Creek in Stafford County. What Richard Henry suggested doing about Ritchie we don’t know, but from the tone of Samuel Washington’s expression of willingness to take part, it probably wasn’t gentle persuasion. Thomas Ludwell Lee’s reply which was dated “Thursday night” probably the fifteenth (see note) was a masterpiece. (12)

Although Richard Henry Lee’s letters to his brother and to Washington have not survived, we can get an inkling of his suggested course of action in an address “To the Good People of Virginia” which he prepared at that time. Speaking of Ritchie he said:

Let us so do to this man, *that fear may haunt him in his dreams and in the day find no safety*, while he gives every one of you reason to be his enemy, and makes it your *duty* to be his foe.... Let it never be forgotten by my countrymen, that the safety of the people is the supreme law, and that no private interest, nor any other consideration, should destroy this. (13)

Thomas Ludwell Lee's letter, starts by telling his brother that he had conferred with Thomas Mason, Colonel William Brent, and "C. Bullet." "We have concluded that the most effectual, and in all respects, the most advisable method, will be to pay Mr. R. a visit; and to insist on a declaration from him in writing, expressing the deepest sorrow for having formed so execrable a design, and promising in the most solemn manner, never to use the Stamp Paper unless authorized by the Assembly of Virginia."

Short of writing Ritchie a letter, that was the least that could be done and the red-head at Chantilly must have snorted when he read that far, but the rest of the letter suited him better. Mason and Bent had gone to Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudoun "to engage a band of choice spirits." The next day T.L. Lee was going to send an express to Bullett in Fauquier and "communicate the plan to such others in this county as I think worthy to be employed in so noble a business." The *fait accompli*: "We propose to be in Leedstown in the afternoon of the 27th inst., where we expect to meet those who will come from your way."

T.L. Lee went on to say that Ritchie's "profligacy is rather to be esteemed fortunate." The "genius of liberty requites us to be awakened," and since Virginia had not been able to send delegates to the Stamp Act Congress, "Something too should be done with *éclat*, to restore us the esteem of our brothers on the continent."

The next paragraph was probably more to the liking of the younger Lee.

It is proposed that those who have swords and pistols shall ride with them; and those who choose it, a firelock. Some precaution of this kind may be necessary, as R., should he get intelligence, may, if surrounded by his fierce North-Britons, sustained by the crews of some vessels, with arms in their hands, reduce us to the necessity of a shameful retreat.

Then a final sweetener for the really mild plan; "This will be a fine opportunity to effect the scheme of an association, and I should be glad you would think of a plan." (14) Richard Henry Lee accepted his brother's plans and asked Richard Parker to pass the word to the proper people in Richmond County.

Parker got to Belfields the evening of the twenty-first. The host was away hunting but he found Dr. William Flood there alarmed by a rumor that troops had been landed from a man of war at Tappahannock. Flood had sent a messenger to find out what had happened from Archibald McCall. The messenger returned late that night with an account of an abortive attempt of the men of Essex County, led by Col. Francis Waring and Ritchie's brother-in-law William Roane, to deal with Ritchie. They had been ignominiously faced down.

While waiting for McCall's reply, Parker had talked to "Col. Belfield, Col. Brockenbrough, Ian Beckwith and Tom Bemis," who were ready to join the plan.

The next morning Parker went on to Captain Beale's. The three Beales were enthusiastic, but they had disturbing news. Landon Carter had stopped by to see Ritchie "on his way back from Hanover." Ritchie had convinced Carter of his repentance, and Carter, ignorant of the plans for the 28th, was in process of writing "Advertisements" in Ritchie's favor. After an unsatisfactory exchange of notes, Parker had breakfast with Carter the morning of the twenty-second.

After some conversational sparring Parker told Carter of the plans. Carter was enthusiastic and would come if his health permitted. He lent Parker his pistols. Carter reported that Ritchie was nervous. They decided that Ritchie should be told that if he absented himself on the twenty-eighth his property would be destroyed. Parker was worried that Ritchie might defeat the whole plan by hanging himself. (15)

Parker's report just about completed the plans.

Exactly what happened at Leedstown and Tappahannock

It is the historian's experience that the sooner an account is written down, the more likely it is to be accurate, assuming that the writer has no reason to lie. The earliest account of the Leedstown meeting is the one dated 1 March 1766 and published in the *Maryland Gazette* on 27 March 1766. A photocopy of that account is appended to this study.

The *Gazette* account leaves two questions up in the air. The first is where the meeting took place. The second is whether the manuscript copy in the Virginia Historical Society includes the signatures of the "great members since" or only the men at the meeting.

As to where, local tradition says the meeting was held at Bray's Church. Eaton says in the *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia* that William Chilton, one of the signers "stated that the Leedstown were written and signed at the Old Church (Bray's)." (16)

More likely they were adopted and signed, for the manuscript shows only one interlineation. That emendation occurs in the seventh line (of the *Gazette* copy) under Secondly, where it reads "represented by Persons of his own chusing." In the manuscript it had read "by Persons who themselves pay." The interlineation reads "chosen by the People and." This could be a correction of an error made in copying from a rough draft. If the resolutions had been put together at the meeting, it would have been hard to hold the crowd together while a fair copy was made for them to sign. Colonial churches were cold and there were warm taverns with various attractions in Leedstown in those days. (17)

It would have been helpful to know to whom and when Chilton made his statement and when it was written down. He died in 1775 at the age of forty-five. The fact that William Robinson, who signed his name right after Richard Henry Lee who signed first, was a vestryman of Bray's Church lends weight to the supposition that the meeting took place there. (18)

The second question, whether the V.H.S. manuscript contains the names of all the signers can be answered in the affirmative. Robert Wormeley Carter, whose name appears twenty-eighth from last, had planned to "come up with" Richard Parker. However, on the twenty-second his seventeen month old son died at three o'clock in the morning. Carter, his in-laws the Beales, and D. Charles Mortimer, who was the Carters' physician, missed the meeting at Leedstown but attended at "Hobb's Hole."

Carter's report of the Tappahannock doings in his Daybook is interesting.

(March 1st) Just returned from Hobbshole where I met a large Compa of Gentlemen who assembled to compel Mr. Archie Ritchie to sign a Paper wherein he confessed his remorse at his declaration of his Intention to clear out on Stampd Paper; this he did in the most impudent way I ever saw anything done; altho' surrounded by about 300 men who were justly incensed at his Behavior & who were all most all [sic.] well armed. (19)

The Signers of the Leedstown Resolutions

Six of the signers of the Leedstown Resolutions were members of the House of Burgesses which met from 1761 to 1765. They were: Richard Henry Lee and Richard Lee from Westmoreland, Thomas Ludwell Lee from Stafford, Francis Lightfoot Lee from Loudoun, Spencer Ball from Northumberland, and John Upshaw from Essex. (20)

Time has not been available to check the list of signers against a list of Justices of the Peace but the proportion would be high. Of the thirty-five men chosen on 31 January 1775 as the Westmoreland County Committee to enforce the Continental Association, which the Congress had adopted the previous October, thirteen had signed the Leedstown Resolutions almost nine years before. They were John

Ashton, Richard Buckner, Thomas Chilton, Thomas Chilton, Richard Lee, Richard Henry Lee, Daniel McCarty, Richard Parker, Joseph Pierce, William Pierce, Edward Sanford, Daniel Tebbs, George Turberville and John Augustine Washington. (21)

Both of Virginia's first Senators under the constitution, William Grayson and Richard Henry Lee, were signers. Lee also served as President of Congress under the Confederation.

The most complete analysis of the signers is to be found in the *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County* at pages 16 to 19. In view of its destination, it would be impertinent to include copies of those pages in this study. This analysis was made in the nineteen twenties, before the publication of Swem's *Index* and the *Index to the Virginia Gazette* prepared by Dr. Lester Cappon and Mrs. Stella Duff to accompany the microfilms of the *Gazette*.

The Leedstown Resolutions

The Leedstown Resolutions, or Westmoreland Resolves, was one of many outcries incited by the Sons of Liberty in America against the Stamp Act. Introduced by George Grenville, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, and passed by Parliament in 1765, the Stamp Act laid a stamp duty on all paper used for legal documents, liquor licenses, academic degrees, etc. Newspapers, pamphlets, almanacs, and advertisements were also taxed. The Stamp Act met immediate organized opposition in the colonies because this was direct taxation, the first direct tax, and because American patriots deemed unfair any taxation without direct representation in Parliament. At Leedstown, Virginia, an influential group assembled on February 27, 1766, and formed the "Association of Westmoreland" to protest his odious act and to forbid any use of stamped paper. (22)

Leedstown, formerly an Indian village, was settled by the English in 1683, and named, either by Fairfaxes or the Washingtons, after the town of Leeds in Yorkshire, England. (23) It was an important Rappahannock port where vessels from England landed and discharged their cargoes. It was here that shiploads of tobacco and other products of the soil were loaded for export. Originally, Leedstown was in Northumberland, then successively in Lancaster, Rappahannock, Richmond, King George, and Westmoreland Counties. (24)

In 1766, Thomas Ludwell Lee, then living in Stafford County, dispatched by boy to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, a letter which read "We propose to be in Leedstown in the afternoon of the 27th inst., where we expect to meet those who will come from your way. It is proposed that all who have swords or pistols will ride with them, and those who choose, a firelock. This will be a fine opportunity to effect the scheme of an association, and I would be glad if you would think of a plan." (25) Thomas Ludwell Lee's call for the Leedstown meeting was sent abroad through the county by Richard Henry.

On February 27, 1766, his call was answered by patriots who came armed. Bray's Church, a brick structure on the outskirts of the town, high on the bank of the river, was the meeting place. (26) Judge Richard Parker of the Circuit Court of Westmoreland County presided over the meeting. The six articles of the Resolutions were offered by Richard Henry Lee and passed by one hundred and fifteen men. (27) The signatures represent not Westmoreland County alone, but all of northeastern Virginia: Thomson Mason of Loudoun, the Mountjoys of Stafford and King George, William Bronaugh of Fairfax, Charles Washington of Fredericksburg, John Ballantine and William Grayson of Prince William, and Will Balle of Lancaster. Fewer than half the signers were residents of Westmoreland County. (28) The original manuscript, with one hundred and fifteen signatures, was kept by Richard Henry Lee, and is now in the archives of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. (29)

According to *The Virginia Experiment*, by A.J. Mapp, Jr., another immediate purpose of the meeting at Leedstown was "to discuss the problem posed by Archibald Ritchie, a merchant of Hobbs Hole

(Tappahannock) on the south bank of the Rappahannock in Essex County, when he made a bold declaration at the February Court across the river in Richmond County (Warsaw). He said he knew where he could get stamps and that he would clear his vessels with stamped paper in compliance with the Act of Parliament.” (30)

The countryside was aghast and then enraged at the merchant’s declaration. Everywhere along the Rappahannock the comment was the same: If merchants yielded, the Stamp Act could be enforced in part at least, and the right of exclusive colonial self-taxation would be destroyed. And so, on the 27th of the month, a number of prominent planters met at Leedstown to decide what they should do about Ritchie’s defiance. (31)

On February 28th, the day following the meeting, four hundred men gathered in the little town of Hobbs Hole. Like other groups that had appeared in Boston and New York, they called themselves Friends of Liberty or Sons of Liberty, thus assuming in pride a name that had been scornfully applied to colonials in the course of Parliamentary debate. (32) They drew up in two lines in something like military formation along the main street while a committee visited Ritchie. He was promptly brought out and required to choose immediately whether to make oath to a certain declaration prepared for the occasion on the preceding day at Leedstown (33) or to take the consequences in accordance with a resolution of the committee that

his Person should be taken and stripp’d Naked to his Waist, tied to the Tail of a cart, and drawn to the public Pillory, where he should be fixed for One Hour, and if in that Time he did not comply, that he should be brought up by the Whole Company to Leeds Town, there to be farther determined on, as should seem expedient to the Friends of Liberty.

His pleas for time to think it over proving unavailing, he signed and swore to the following declaration that was pressed upon him:

Sensible now of the high Insult I offered this Country by declaring at Richmond Court lately, my Determination to make use of Stamp Paper for Clearing out my Vessels: and being convinced such Proceeding would establish a Precedent by which the hateful Stamp Act might be introduced into this Colony, to the Utter Destruction of Public Liberty; I do most submissibly, in Presence of the Public, Sign this Paper meaning to Show my deep Remorse, for having formed so execrable a Design; and I do hereby solemnly Promise and Swear on the Holy Evangelists, that no Vessel of mine shall sail cleared on Stamp Paper, and that I never will on any Pretense Make Use of, or Cause to be made Use of Stamp Paper, unless the Use of such Paper, shall be authorized by the General Assembly of this Colony.(34)

“Every element of pride in Ritchie rebelled against the idea of signing such a declaration. Is the statement just? one of the leaders asked. The merchant saw two long lines of faces as grim as death’s hands. He murmured that the declaration was just, took the quill handed him, and signed his name.” (35)

The violent event at Hobbs Hole was followed by a similar one. “A person whose name need not be mentioned here, had not only declared his intention to use stamp paper, but had accepted the office of stamp collector. When Mr. Lee was informed of these circumstances, according to the fourth Article of the Association, he gave notice to as many of the members of it as he could, and summoned his company of horse. They proceeded to the residence of the stamp collector, and required him to bring out his commission, and all the paper he had in his house, and deliver it to them, and also to bind himself, by an oath, neither directly nor indirectly to promote the sale or use of stamp paper. The collector expostulated, hesitated, and at length refused. A stout and fierce-looking man of the troop advanced at this moment to him, and with a stern look and penetrating voice addressed him, ‘Swear’. The terrified collector pronounced oath, and brought out his commission and stamp paper, which were solemnly burnt in his presence.” (36)

It is interesting to note that when Richard Henry Lee first heard of Parliament's intention to lay a stamp duty on America early in November, 1764, he, upon the persuasion of some of his friends, applied for appointment as a stamp collector. The application arrived in London, however, after the appointments had already been made. In his *Memoir*, it is related that "he quickly discerned the design and principle of the Act, and stopped the application." Whichever case, he was never a stamp collector.

The Leedstown Association inspired imitation. On March 31, the Norfolk Sons of Liberty resolved to use all "lawful ways and means" to protect their right "of being taxed by none but representatives of their own choosing and of being tried only by a jury of their own peers." (37) (The colonies did not know then that Parliament had already repealed the Stamp Act on March 18, 1766.)

But Leedstown was not the beginning of opposition to the Stamp Act. Twenty-seven distinguished delegates representing nine colonies convened the Stamp Act Congress on October 19, 1765 in New York City, to protest the Stamp Act. It declared that the Stamp Act and other measures extended "the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits..." and had "a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists." It was further resolved that "it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them but with their own consent, given personally or by their representatives" and that "the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain." (38)

The following winter, the Sons of Liberty sponsored meetings in opposition to the Stamp Act throughout the colonies. They took the lead in Connecticut in New London on December 10, 1765, in Pomfret on December 25, 1765, and in Wallingford on January 13, 1766. Meetings were also reported at Providence (Rhode Island), New York City, Oyster Bay, Huntington (New York), New Brunswick (New Jersey), Cecil County (Maryland), and Wilmington (North Carolina), enunciating the readiness of the people to resist the Stamp Act "to the last extremity, at any Risk whatsoever, at every Hazard, paying no Regard to Danger, or to Death." (39) On February 8, 1766, the Stamp Act was flatly outlawed by the Northampton (Virginia) County Court, which declared that "the said act did not bind, affect, or concern the inhabitants of this colony, inasmuch as they conceive the same to be unconstitutional, and that the said several officers may proceed to the execution on their respective offices, without incurring any penalties by means thereof." (40)

The consequence of American opposition such as that at Leedstown was that the proceeds from the duty were less than the expense of collection. Among the court records of Westmoreland County there appear only two stamped documents, both powers of attorney given by English merchants visiting Virginia. (41) The non-importation agreements, adopted by the Sons of Liberty, were greatly detrimental to British trade. In England business was paralyzed. A letter from Bristol, written in February, 1766, stated that

of late there has been a total stagnation of all business; thousands of poor manufacturers at Birmingham, Sheffield, Yorkshire, &c. &c. have been turned off, and are now starving for want of employ; and what the consequences will be unless the Stamp Act is repealed, God only knows, as all the orders for goods to be sent to North America are conditional, and not to be sent until the Act is repealed. (42)

It was this decline of business that persuaded the new Rockingham Ministry to repeal the Stamp Act on March 18, 1766. (43) *The Virginia Gazette* published the joyful news on May 22nd, although formal proclamation at Williamsburg was not made until June 9th. (44) We must remember, however, that no matter how bold or treasonous the Leedstown Resolutions was, it had no influence on Parliament's decision to repeal the Act. On March 18, news of the adoption of the Resolutions had not yet reached England.

Although the Leedstown Resolutions was not the first or only organized colonial opposition to the Stamp Act, it was the only active resistance to it. Unlike the other meetings, Leedstown did not merely state

contempt for the Act. It went further than “enunciating the readiness of the people to resist the Stamp Act.” The Assembly at Leedstown resolved to use unstamped paper, to punish those who did use stamped paper, and to defend each other against anyone who tried to enforce the act or who tried to punish violators of the Act. One hundred and fifteen men risked their lives by putting their names to this bold and treasonous declaration. Nor did their signatures mark the end of their resolution. They began immediately to execute their solemn covenant by descending upon Mr. Ritchie the following day and by terrorizing a local stamp collector shortly thereafter. This, then, was not merely sedition, but treason; and here lies the distinction between threatening remonstrances adopted by other groups and the bold plan of action subscribed and implemented by the Westmoreland Association.

Notes

1. J.C. Ballagh, ed. *Letters of Richard Henry Lee*. New York, 1911. I, 15.
2. *Maryland Gazette*, 17 October 1765, 27 March 1766. Microfilm by Yale University Library, New Haven, 1932. *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), October 1765-June 1766, *passim.*, *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 16 May and 30 May, 1766. Microfilm by Institute of Early American History, Williamsburg, 1952.
3. R. H. Lee, Jr., *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee and His Correspondence*, 2 vols., Philadelphia 1824, I, 34-35.
4. *Southern Literary Messenger*, VIII (1842), 258-259; Cazenove Gardiner Lee, Jr., *Lee Chronicle*, New York, 1957, 182. *Virginia Historical Register*, II (1849), 15-18.
5. J. P. Kennedy, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765*, Richmond, 1907, LXII-LXIII.
6. R. B. Harwell, ed., *The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle*, Richmond, 1956, 13, 99-102. *Lee Chronicle*, 138-139 and plates XXIV-a-XXIV-d.
7. *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1761-1765*, 256-257, 292, 302-304, 307.
8. *Ibid.*, LXVIII-LXIX, LXX. *Maryland Gazette*, 16 October 1765.
9. *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 30 May 1766. Edmund Cody Burnett, *Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress*, Washington, 1921, I, *passim.* Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Washington, I, *passim.*
10. *J. H. B., 1761-1765*, LXXI-LXXII: Mercer to Horatio Sharpe (Governor of Maryland), 10 November 1765. W. H. Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland*, XIV, 236-237. Also Sharpe to Lord Baltimore, 24 December 1765, *loc. cit.*, XIV, 240.
11. Samuel Washington to R. H. Lee, 22 February 1766, Lee Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.
12. T. L. Lee’s “Thursday night” is assigned to 15 February because the date and place of the meeting assigned therein were not known to R. H. Lee when he wrote to S. Washington on Friday, 9 February, but must have been known by Wednesday 21 February when Richard Parker started his trip to Essex and Richmond Counties, *vide infra*. It is possible that T. L. Lee’s letter was in transit from Stafford County on Friday, 9 February when R. H. Lee wrote to Washington, but hardly likely in that case that Washington would know “where and when to meet” on Thursday the twenty-second.
13. R. H. Lee, Jr., *Memoir*, I, 39.
14. T. L. Lee to R. H. Lee, “Thursday night” in *Southern Literary Messenger*, VIII (1842), 257-258.
15. Richard Parker to R. H. Lee, 23 February 1766, Lee Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.
16. *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia*, 17.
17. C. G. Lee, Jr., *Lee Chronicles*, Plates XXIVa-XXIVb.
18. *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia*, 16-17.
19. Louis Morton, ed., “The Daybook of Robert Wormeley Carter of Sabine Hall, 1766” in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 68 (1960), 305-306.
20. *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1761-1765*, pp. 313-314.
21. Harwell, ed., *Committees of Safety*, p. 16.
22. This declaration is often erroneously cited as a forerunner or prelude to the Declaration of Independence. Actually the signers of the Resolutions were proud and loyal Englishmen, seeking only the restoration of what they conceived to be their rights as British subjects, with no thought of Independence from England.

23. "In 1608, when Captain John Smith and his party first explored the Rappahannock river, Leedstown was then an Indian town of much consequence, the home of King Passassack, of the Rappahannock tribe. Captain Smith's party was attacked by these Rappahannocks, and Richard Featherstone was killed. He was buried on the south side of the Rappahannock river, near the water edge, a few miles below Leedstown. This was the first death and burial of a white man in this section." Wright, T. R. B. *Westmoreland County, Virginia*, Richmond, 1912, p. 40.
24. Eaton, David W., *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia*, Richmond, 1942, p. 14.
25. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Haynie, Miriam, *The Stronghold*, Richmond, 1959, p. 148.
26. Armes, Ethel, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees*, Richmond, 1936, p. 140; see also Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 17, where the author ascribes to Will Chilton, a signer of the Leedstown Resolutions, the statement that the Resolutions was signed at Bray's Church; but see Eubank, H. Rayland, *Historic Northern Neck of Virginia*, Richmond, 1934, p. 38: "The house in which they met stood until a few years ago. Its site is occupied now by the store building to the right as we enter the village."
27. No contemporary record has been discovered confirming the presence at Leedstown of all one hundred and fifteen signers. Indeed, if Article Five of the Resolutions accomplished its purpose, then some of the signatures must have been appended afterwards. Otherwise, we are led to conclude that none of the one hundred and fifteen subscribers was able to obtain a single additional signature.
28. Eaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-19.
29. This document was found among the papers of Major Henry Lee, eldest son of General Henry Lee, nephew of Richard Henry Lee.
30. Mapp, A. J., Jr., *The Virginia Experiment*, Richmond, 1957, pp. 316-322.
31. Freeman, Douglas S., *Washington*, Vol. 3, New York, 1951, p. 153.
32. Mapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-322.
33. Mapp, *Ibid.*, pp. 316-322; the one hundred and fifteen may or may not have come to Leedstown for the express purpose of discussing the problem caused by Ritchie's announcement; but at least this problem was discussed and plans were made to meet the next day in Hobbs Hole.
34. Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Mays, *Edmund Pendleton*, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 171-172.
35. Mapp, *op. cit.*, p. 321; the Mapp account of the Ritchie declaration is confirmed by the fact that Ritchie's signature was not appended to the Leedstown Resolutions. Whatever paper he signed must have been another one.
36. Lee, R. H., *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee*, Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1825, p. 36.
37. Mapp, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
38. "Stamp Act," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 25th ed., 1957, Vol. 21, p. 306.
39. Morgan, E. S. and H. S., *The Stamp Act Crisis*, Chapel Hill, 1953, p. 200. *Maryland Gazette*, January 30, 1766, March 20, 1766, March 27, 1766, April 10, 1766; *Newport Mercury*, March 31, 1766; *Pennsylvania Journal*, January 30, 1766, March 6, 1766; and April 17, 1766.
40. Works Projects Administration, *Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion*, New York, 1940, pp. 50-51.
41. Westmoreland County Records, Vol. 4, pp. 215-216.
42. Mays, *op. cit.*, p. 173; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), April 11, 1766.
43. Krout, John A., *United States to 1865*, New York, 1962, p. 39.
44. Mays, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

Bibliography

1. Armes, Ethel, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees*, Richmond, Garret and Massie, Inc. 1936.
2. Eaton, David, W., *Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia*, Richmond, Dietz Press, 1942.
3. Eubank, H. Ragland, *Historic Northern Neck of Virginia*, Richmond, Whittet and Shepperson, 1934.
4. Freeman, *Washington*, Vol. 3, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.
5. Haynie, Miriam, *The Stronghold*, Richmond, Dietz Press, 1959.
6. Howe, Henry, *Historical Collections of Virginia*, Babcock and Co., Charleston, 1845.
7. Kester, Paul, *The Westmoreland Association*, Bulletin I, (c. 1930).
8. Krout, John A., *United States to 1865*, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1962.
9. Lee, R. H., *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee*, Vol. I, Philadelphia, H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1825.
10. Mapp, A. J. Jr., *The Virginia Experiment*, Richmond, Dietz Press, 1957.