

III THE COMMON CAUSE

5. The South Carolina delegates refused to sign the Association unless rice and indigo, crucial to the economic prosperity of their colony, were exempted from the list of forbidden exports.

6. General Thomas Gage, commander in chief of the British army in North America, who in May had replaced Thomas Hutchinson as governor of Massachusetts.

7. The endorsement of the Suffolk Resolves on September 17 signaled the rise of radical fortunes in the Congress. Adopted by residents of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, on September 9 and delivered to the Congress by express rider Paul Revere, the resolves constituted a de facto declaration of rebellion. The resolutions declared that the Coercive Acts were unconstitutional and thus ought to be ignored, recommended that economic sanctions be imposed against Britain, urged the people to form their own militia units and prepare to defend their liberties on the battlefield, and advised the people of Massachusetts to create their own government, which would be empowered to collect taxes and withhold the same from the royal regime.

8. In an October 26 letter "To the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec," the Congress speciously argued that the Quebec Act of 1774 deprived the former French subjects of their civil liberties and invited them to join the common cause. But the Frenchmen wanted no part of the British colonial quarrel.

9. The memorial to Americans and address to Britons both noted the enmity between the French Canadians and the British colonials.

10. Is "Z" John Lawrence? See Sec. IV, Doc. 1, note 2.

11 The Call for the Election of Essex County Committees of Observation

[*New-York Gazette; and the Weekly Mercury*, December 5, 1774.]

Essex County took the lead in implementing the Continental Association in New Jersey. Since enforcement of the Association depended upon the effectiveness of the local committees of observation and inspection, care was taken to ensure that the men named to the committees had the confidence and support of the members of the local community. As the stakes of the imperial contest became greater, it was increasingly imperative that the popular front enjoy the widest possible base of support; the multiplication of local organizations increased the opportunity of popular participation in political activities. Moreover, the creation of extralegal agencies charged with compelling obedience to illegal measures was a direct challenge to the law-enforcement powers of the provincial government and presented the people with their first serious crisis of allegiance in deciding whether to obey vigilantes or magistrates.

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

To the Freeholders of the County of Essex, in the Province of New-Jersey, qualified to Vote for Representatives in the Legislature.

County of Essex, Nov. 28, 1774

Gentlemen,

The zeal you have hitherto manifested in support of the constitutional liberties of our country, will unquestionably prompt you to carry into execution, with firmness and unanimity, the wise and prudent resolutions, lately entered into by the delegates of this continent in General Congress. In the eleventh article of the ASSOCIATION formed in behalf of themselves and their constituents, it was agreed "That a committee be chosen in every county, city and town, by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature; whose business it shall be to observe the conduct of all persons, touching the said association." We your committee of correspondence, cannot in the least doubt your ready and immediate compliance with the article: For as the salutary effects to arise from this association, must, under God, depend upon the fidelity of individuals, in carrying it precisely into execution; so should any inhabitant of this colony, be found so lost to a sense of public virtue, as to violate the same in any instance, such person, pursuant to the said article, may by your committees "be held up to public notice, as unfriendly to the liberties of his country, and all dealings with him, or her, be thenceforward broken off." We have therefore thought fit to recommend to you, that for the more extensive observation of the conduct of individuals, committees be chosen for each of the three precincts, into which the county is divided, viz. Elizabeth Town, Newark, and Achquakanung.¹ And we do hereby give notice to, and request the Freeholders of the respective precincts to convene for that purpose, as follows—For the borough of Elizabeth, at the Court House in Elizabeth Town, on Tuesday, the 6th day of December next, at 2 o'clock P.M.; For Newark, at the Court House in Newark, on Wednesday the 7th day of December; and for Achquakanung, on Monday the 12th day of December, at the bridge, opposite the house of Timothy Day.² And we do also recommend to you, that ten at least of the most reputable inhabitants, for Achquakanung; fifteen for Newark and twenty for Elizabeth Town, be elected for the above purpose.

As delegates from the several colonies are again to be appointed, to meet at Philadelphia on the tenth day of May next, it will be farther expedient, that the inhabitants make choice of a NEW COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE; with power to instruct the representatives for this county, when convened in General Assembly, to join in the appointment of Delegates for the colony, to meet in the said Congress: But if the said General Assembly shall not appoint delegates for that purpose, by the first day of April next, then the said committee of correspondence, to meet with the several county-committees of this colony, and appoint the said delegates, at such time and place, as shall be agreed upon by the said committees.³

STEPHEN CRANE⁴
JOHN DE HART
WILLIAM LIVINGSTON

ISAAC OGDEN
W. P. SMITH
ELIAS BOUDINOT

JO. RIGGS, JUN.
JOHN CHETWOOD
HENRY GERRITS[E]

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1. Or Acquackanonk.
2. Acquackanonk tavern owner.
3. Jerseymen were still uncertain about the relative roles to be played by the established legislature and extralegal organizations in the development of the resistance movement. While hoping that the assembly would assume a position of leadership by appointing delegates to the second Congress, the Essex gathering made provision for the representatives to be chosen by county committeemen as had been done previously (see Doc. 4). The lower house did reassert itself in January by endorsing the action of the Continental Congress and naming congressmen (see Sec. IV, Doc. 4), but it eventually was replaced by a Provincial Congress as the coordinator of protest activities (see Sec. V, Doc. 1).
4. For biographical sketches of committeemen, see the notes for Doc. 2.

12 The Elizabethtown Association Resolutions

[*New-York Gazette; and the Weekly Mercury*, December 19, 1774.]

In keeping with the ethos of the protest movement, the Association and other recommendations of the Continental Congress became operative through public endorsement at mass meetings throughout New Jersey. The popular gatherings greatly advanced the notion that legitimate political authority derived not from formal governmental institutions but from the people at large. The committees of correspondence that were simultaneously created by popular election functioned as an agency of local governance as well as an instrument of intraprovincial communication. The public destruction of opposition literature, a common ritual at protest meetings, symbolized both the power of the popular front and the fate of those who dared openly oppose it.

[December 6, 1774]¹

At a meeting of the freeholders of Elizabeth-Town, in Essex-county, on Tuesday the first day of December, 1774,

Stephen Crane Esq; in the Chair.

The committee of correspondence for the county of Essex, having produced the ASSOCIATION lately entered into by the delegates of the American colonies, met in General Congress; the same was read to and then unanimously approved and adopted by the whole assembly: Who were pleased at the same time, to signify their thanks to the delegates of this colony, for their faithful services.

It was then proposed, that pursuant to the eleventh article of the said