

III THE COMMON CAUSE

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

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Association, a large committee should be now chosen for the purposes therein mentioned: Which was also agreed to, and the following persons were accordingly appointed, viz. Jonathan Hampton, Matthias Williamson, Elias Dayton, Isaac Woodruff, William Barnet, William Herriman, Oliver Spencer, George Ross, Edward Thomas, Cornelius Hetfield, John Blanchard, Ephraim Tyrrel, Abraham Clarke, Robert Ogden, jun. Jeremiah Smith, Richard Townly, jun. Samuel Shotwell, David Miller, Thomas Woodruff, John Clawson, Jonathan Dayton, Ephraim Marsh, Recompence Stanbury, Jedediah Swan, William Parsons, Samuel Potter, William Bott, Jonathan Williams, Christopher Marsh, Isaac Wynants, Daniel Halsey.

After which the committee of correspondence informed the assembly, that having executed the services for which they had been particularly appointed they had thought proper to dissolve themselves; in order that the inhabitants of the respective precincts of the county might have the opportunity of a new choice. Whereupon Stephen Crane, John De Hart, William Livingston, William P. Smith, Elias Boudinot, and John Chetwood, Esqrs, being of the late committee, were unanimously re-elected for the borough of Elizabeth;² and at the same time authorized to instruct the representatives of this county, when convened in General Assembly, to join in the appointments of delegates for this colony, to meet in General Congress at Philadelphia: But if the said Assembly should 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.

The above business being finished, the assembly unanimously voted—That two certain pamphlets lately published; the one entitled, *A Friendly Address &c.*³ and the other under the signature of *A Farmer*,⁴ as containing many notorious fals[e]hoods, evidently calculated to sow the seeds of disunion among the good people of America; grossly misrepresenting the principle of the present opposition to parliamentary taxations; vilifying the late Congress; and intended to facilitate the scheme of the British ministry for enslaving the colonies, be publicly burnt, in destestation and abhorrence of such infamous publications: And the same were accordingly committed to the flames, before the court-house, with the universal approbation of a numerous concourse of people.

1. There is confusion about the date of the meeting. The report says that the meeting occurred on "Tuesday the first day of December," but December 1, 1774 fell on Thursday; the first Tuesday in the month was the sixth. The call for county committees (see Doc. 11.) stipulated that the Elizabethtown meeting was to be held on December 6, hence my feeling that the report should have read "the first Tuesday in December."

2. See Doc. 2

3. *A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans on the Subject of our Political Confusions: in which the necessary consequences of Violently opposing the King's Troops, and of A General Non-Importation are Fairly Stated* (New York, 1774), written by the Reverend Thomas Bradbury Chandler, rector of St. John's in Elizabethtown.

III THE COMMON CAUSE

4. The reference here is undoubtedly to "A. W. Farmer," the pseudonym of the Reverend Samuel Seabury of Westchester County, New York. The publication in question could be either *Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress . . .* (New York, 1774) or *The Congress Canvassed . . .* (New York, 1774).

13 Governor William Franklin to Lord Dartmouth

[*NJA*, 10:503-4.]

William Franklin, like most royal governors, faced the dilemma of attempting to serve two masters during the imperial crises. On the one hand he was charged with the maintenance of law and order and preserving the authority of the mother country; on the other, he sincerely wished to further the interests of New Jersey and personally disliked many of the measures instituted by Britain after 1763. Above all Franklin and his cohorts felt a growing isolation and inability to act. Without a police force and unable to utilize the militia (the militia was composed of protesters), he could only keep up a facade of authority and forward intelligence to his superiors.

Perth Amboy Decr. 6th 1774

My Lord,

I had the Honor, on the 29th. of Octr. to write your Lordship a few Lines from New York, enclosing a Pamphlet containing Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia; since which I have been honoured with your Lordships Dispatch of the 7th. of September. . . .

Altho' the Proceedings of the Congress are not altogether satisfactory to many of the Inhabitants of the Colonies, yet there seems at present little Reason to doubt but that the Terms of Association will be generally carried into Execution, even by those who dislike Parts of it. But few have the Courage to declare their Disapprobation publicly, as they well know, if they do not conform, they are in Danger of becoming Objects of popular Resentment, from which it is not in the Power of Government here to protect them. Indeed the Officers of Government in all the Colonies (except at Boston)¹ have but little or no Protection for themselves.

It must afford every good Subject Pleasure, should the Result of their Proceedings be found (as your Lordship wishes) "such as not to cut off all Hope of that Union with the Mother Country which is so essential to the Happiness of both." But it seems apprehended by many sensible and moderate Men here, that it will be the Opinion of the Mother Country that the Congress has left her no other alternative than either to consent to what must appear humiliating in the Eyes of all