

IV THE DIE IS CAST

14 The Bergen County Association

[New Jersey Broadside Collection (Political), Alexander Library,
Rutgers University.]

Bergen was one of the last counties in New Jersey to agree to the Continental Association. Strong opposition to the programs of the popular front had always existed in this rural region inhabited largely by the traditional-minded Jersey Dutch. Politics here was especially fragmented, partly because of the schism between the Coetus (supporters of an American-trained clergy) and Conferentie (advocates of the Amsterdam Classis) factions in the Dutch Reformed Church. The early months of 1775 found some towns supporting the Association and others denouncing it. But the shots exchanged at Lexington and Concord brought converts to the cause. The unique broadside that follows exemplifies the ethnic heterogeneity of colonial New Jersey. Since a substantial number, perhaps even a majority, of Bergen residents were of Dutch extraction, it is likely that most important public announcements were printed in both Dutch and English.

May 12, 1775

Being fully convinced that the Preservation of the Rights and Privileges of the British Colonies in America, now depends on the firm Union of their Inhabitants, in a vigorous Prosecution of the Measures necessary for their Safety; and dreading a State of Anarchy and Confusion, which will necessarily attend the present Struggle for our Liberty, unless the proper Steps are taken to preserve Regularity and Unanimity among us:—We the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Bergen, being greatly alarmed at the avowed Design of the British Ministry, and the Acts of Parliament for raising a Revenue in America, independent of the Provincial Assemblies, and being extremely shocked and grieved at the unhappy Consequences which have attended the Attempts to enforce the late unconstitutional Acts of the British Legislature, DO resolve, that we will not submit to those Acts of Parliament which impose Taxes on us without our consent, and deprive us of our Constitutional Rights and Privileges; and therefore do associate under the Ties of Honor, and Love to our Country, that we will abide by and endeavour to carry into Execution, all Constitutional Measures whatsoever, which may be advised by the Continental Congress, and recommended by the Provincial Convention, for the Purpose of preserving our Constitution and opposing the several oppressive Acts of Parliament, until a Reconciliation on Constitutional Principles (which we most ardently desire) may be effected between Great-Britain and the American Colonies: And that we will in all Things follow the Advice of the County Committee for the Purpose aforesaid, and for the Preservation of Peace and good Order, and the Safety of Individuals and Security of private Property.

[Paragraph in Dutch deleted]