

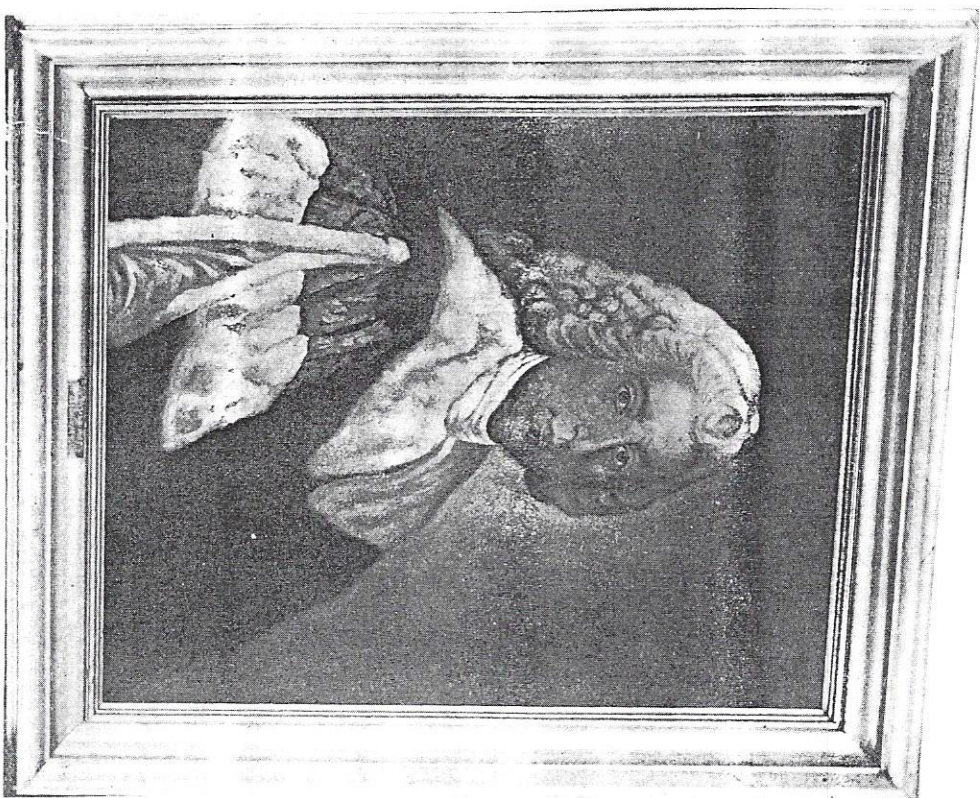
THE HISTORY

of

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY VIRGINIA

BY

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WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM

This portrait hangs in the court room of Pittsylvania County

REGIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

Baltimore

1976

Examinations of persons for political opinions occurred in all parts of the colony, proving that there were people everywhere attached to Great Britain. Social position and wealth—in all other ways a very great power in Virginia—failed usually to protect such offenders, who long before the Declaration of Independence were regarded as traitors." (Echenrode, pp. 104-106.)

On account of the tax that had been laid on tea, the drinking of tea was banned, to partake of the beverage was considered a virtual act of treason. Captain John Pigg,²⁰ a vestryman and captain of the local militia, was reported to the committee as one who had violated the Association "by drinking and making use of in his family the detestable East Indian tea." When summoned to appear before the Committee in May 1776, Captain Pigg boldly refused, considering it an impertinent interference in his family affairs and replied that, "he would do as he pleased." In their righteous indignation the Committee at once published him in the *Gazette* as being "inimical to the cause."

After the royal government under the English governor was dissolved Virginia called a convention to take over its powers, which met at Richmond in July, 1775, and at which Pittsylvania was represented by Peter Perkins and Benjamin Lankford. Immediate action was taken to put the colony in a state of defense—two regiments of 1,000 men were authorized to be raised for the Northern Continental Army under General Washington, a body of Minute Men for the State's defense, while the militia was to be reorganized.

In order that the troops called for the Continental Army might be equally proportioned among the several counties, the state was divided into sixteen military districts, of which Pittsylvania, Bedford, Botetourt and Fincastle formed one district and were allotted to furnish one captain, two lieutenants and sixty-eight men, who were to be expert riflemen and attached to the regiments. Each of the sixteen military districts was called upon to raise a battalion of 500 Minute Men, to be divided into ten companies of 50 men each, under the command of a colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major. In order to render the men "more expert in military exercise," they were to be trained for twenty days under the adjutant as soon as enlisted, then four days out of each month, with a general muster in the district spring and fall lasting twelve days.

²⁰John Pigg was the son of Paul Pigg of Amelia County, who moved to Pittsylvania when a very old man, and whose will is the first on record in the Clerk's Office. John Pigg was an early settler and Pigg River was named for him. He married Anne Clement and his will was proven February 1785, in which he bequeathed to his only son Hezekiah Ford Pigg the mill tract, his two guns, rifle and silver buckles.

In addition to these military forces "it was adjudged necessary in the present time of danger" that all free male persons between the ages of eighteen and fifty should be trained for military duty, and be formed into companies of militia of not less than thirty-two nor more than sixty-eight men. That every militia man should furnish himself with a good rifle, or tomahawk, common firelock, bayonet, pouch or cartouch box, and three charges of powder and ball; and further that the companies should be drilled every two weeks, with a general county muster in April and October.

The Committee of Safety for Pittsylvania proceeded at once to organize the county for military defense. The military strength of the county was given in a census of 1774 as 1438 men, and these were organized into twenty-seven companies. The record reads:

"At a meeting of the Committee of Pittsylvania County on Wednesday the 27th, September, 1775, the following gentlemen were nominated as officers of the militia agreeable to the Ordinance of the Convention, viz.:

'John Donelson, Esq.—County Lieutenant.

'Robert Williams, Esq.—Colonel.

'William Tunstall, Esq.—Lieutenant-Colonel.

'John Wilson, Esq.—Major.

"Captains: Benjamin Lankford, Peter Perkins, Francis Luck,²¹

James Lyons, Robert Hairston,²² Robert Woods, Daniel Shelton, Jesse

Heard,²³ Frederick Rives, John Donelson, Jr., Archelaus Hughes,²⁴

Joseph Martin,²⁵ John Dix, William Witcher, Gabriel Shelton, Henry

²¹Francis Luck's will was proven July 17, 1781, naming wife Sarah, sons John, Nathaniel, Richard Hubbard; daughters Joyce, Rhoda, Betty, Sarah, Anne Deadman, Lucy, City Evans, Luck. His home was in the eastern part of the county at a point now known as "Lucks," though the mansion house has long since disappeared. The place was noted for its elaborate and beautifully laid out gardens, which surrounded the house; unfortunately these too have disappeared.

²²Robert Hairston, the son of Peter Hairston, a Scotchman of Albemarle County, lived in that part of Pittsylvania that later became Henry County. He married Ruth Sovall, the daughter of George Sovall, and left three sons, Peter and George of Henry County, and Samuel of Franklin County.

²³Stephen Heard's will was proven at Pittsylvania Courthouse November, 1774. He named wife Mary, children Jesse Heard, Stephen Heard, George Heard, Mary Heard, Anne Gwiltim, Susannah Standiford.

²⁴Archelaus Hughes settled in the western part of Pittsylvania that later became Patrick County. He married Mary, daughter of Samuel Dalton, and had issue: Leander, Archelaus, William, James, John, Samuel, Reuben, Nancy, Madison Redd, Sally, who married Col. Joe Martin, Martha who married Gen'l John Dillard.

²⁵Joseph Martin had been a "long hunter" of Albemarle County. In 1774 he purchased a plantation in Pittsylvania on Leatherwood Creek to which he moved. He was active in Indian affairs along the frontier, and acted as Indian agent for a number of years. He married, 18th, Sarah Lucas and, 21st, Susanna Graves, leaving the following children: Susanna, William, Elizabeth, Brice, Joseph, Jesse, Thomas, Lewis and Alexander. He served many years in the Virginia Legislature.

Williams, John Salmon, Robert Payne,²⁶ Jonathan Hanby, William Peters Martin, Jehu Morton,²⁷ Charles Connors, Richard Gwynne, John Smith, Edmund Lyne, Joshua Abston,²⁸ and James Hix; Lieutenants: Stephen Coleman, Joseph Terry, Thomas Withers, William Ward, Robert Boreman, Thomas Smith, Charles Burke, Bartlett Williams, Samuel Shields, John Strong, Spencer Shelton, Reuben Payne, Beverley Shelton, John Morton, Isaac Clement, James George, Tully Choice, Jr., Edmund Cheat, Thomas Jones, Sr., George Hairston, Bryce Martin, David Lanier, George Waller, John Cunningham, Frederick Fulkerson, Elisha Shelton, Benjamin Hursely; Ensigns: Charles Irby, Joseph Terry (son of Joseph), George Carter, William Been, Samuel Bolling, Thomas Black, John Wynne, William Dix, John Fulton, Thomas Smith, Edmund Taylor, Armisted Shelton, John Payne, Lyrus Roberts, William Short, Joseph Farrar, William Estes, Levinfield Heit, Peter Vardaman, James Poteet, John Wells, James Taylor, James Anthony, David Chockwell, John Parr, Leonard Carter, John Rentfro.”

With such extensive military plans as the state had called for, we may know that the men of Pittsylvania County spent a great part of their time in the autumn and winter of '75-'76 on the various musterfields of the county.

The *Virginia Gazette* gives an incident of Pittsylvania life at this time, showing that youth and age alike were bending every effort to prepare for the struggle with the mother country. In the issue of August 1775, there is a statement by Mr. Charles Lynch, whose home lay across Staunton River, in Campbell County (not far from Altavista), in which he said:

“Sometime ago my having made powder was mentioned in your paper, but as I wish for no more merit (should there be any in it) than

²⁶Robert Payne was the son of Josias Payne of Goochland and Pittsylvania, whose will was probated at Pittsylvania Courthouse December 19, 1785, in which he bequeathed his estate as follows:

To son John, 200 acres on Little Birch Creek and 400 on James River.

To son William, 400 acres in Fluvanna.

To son Josias, 700 in Goochland.

To son George, 200 acres in Goochland and 200 on the Three Chopt Road.

To Robert, 800 acres in Goochland, the plantation I formerly lived on.

He named daughters, Susanna, wife of William Heale; Anne, wife of William Harrison (of Pittsylvania County) and Agnes Michel. Robert Payne married in July 22, 1763, Anne Burton of Goochland and had issue: 1. Charles Payne, 2. Robert Payne, 3. John Payne, Elizabeth Payne.

5. Keturah Payne, 6. Anne Payne. And 7. Agnes Payne, married Marmaduke Williams.

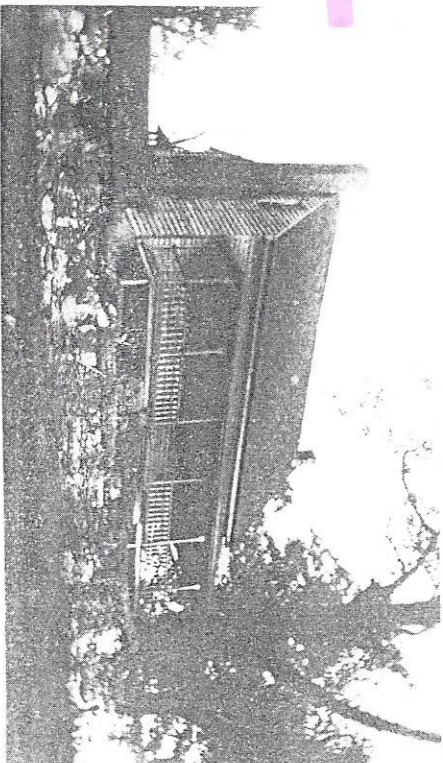
Colonel John Payne, a brother of Josias Payne, the elder, married Mary Coles, the daughter of William Coles of Coles' Hill of Hanover County, and were the parents of Dolly Payne, who later

became the fascinating Dolly Madison.

²⁷Jehu Morton was one of the sons of Joseph Morton, Sr., one of the earliest settlers of the County.

²⁸Joshua Abston was the son of Francis Abston, whose will was proven in Halifax in 1762, naming sons William, John, Jesse and Joshua Abston. John Ward was a witness to the will. Joshua Abston

married Rachel Clement, a daughter of Capt. Benj. Clement and moved to South Carolina.



CLEMENT HILL.

Home of Capt. Benjamin Clement who first settled here in 1748.
The porches are modern additions.