TOWN AND PROVINCE IN REVOLUTIONARY NEW HAMPSHIRE: A STABLE POLITICAL CULTURE CONFRONTS CHANGE, 1765--1776

Marilyn Mulzer Robbert
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Abstract
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Keywords
History, United States

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Town and province in revolutionary New Hampshire: A stable political culture confronts change, 1765–1776

Robbert, Marilyn Mulzer, Ph.D.

University of New Hampshire, 1987

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TOWN AND PROVINCE IN REVOLUTIONARY NEW HAMPSHIRE:
A STABLE POLITICAL CULTURE CONFRONTS
CHANGE, 1765-1776

By

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B.A. Northern Michigan University, 1965
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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
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May, 1987
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE LEGISLATURE AND ITS LEADERS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. TOWNS BECOME AWARE OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. TOWNS CONSIDER THEIR OPTIONS</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONGRESS ACCEPTS RELUCTANTLY THE BURDENS OF GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. TOWNS ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NEW GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENTS: FAMILIAR PATTERNS CONTINUE</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
<th>248</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table I</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table II</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table III</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table IV</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table V</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table VI</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table VII</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table VIII</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table IX</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

Figure 1................................................. 28
Figure 2................................................. 31
ABSTRACT

TOWN AND PROVINCE IN REVOLUTIONARY NEW HAMPSHIRE:
A STABLE POLITICAL CULTURE CONFRONTS CHANGE, 1765-1776

by

Marilyn Mulzer Robbert
University of New Hampshire, May, 1987

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INTRODUCTION

I am extremely happy in the universal esteem of all this province, who emulate each other in obliging me and endeavoring to make my administration as easy and profitable as they can. Whatever surmises may have arisen, or disgust taken place, against the other provinces, New Hampshire is not in the least involved in it. They are obedient, faithful subjects, and ready to exert their utmost to support and defend the British Government. ¹

In these words, in August 1767, John Wentworth described to a friend his satisfaction with his new position as Royal Governor of New Hampshire and his firm belief that the people of the colony were equally pleased with King George III’s selection. Governor Wentworth was correct, for the moment, in his assessment of the colony’s temperament and of the residents’ feelings towards him. Yet seven years later, in August 1775, the popular Governor abandoned his colony for the comforts of Boston, leaving it under the titular control of the Fourth Provincial Congress, an extralegal body which had no definite plans for the assumption of authority. On January 5, 1776, the Fifth Provincial Congress voted to “take up Civil Government” and adopted America’s first state constitution. ²
Historians trying to understand the advent of the Revolution in New Hampshire grope for explanations for the spectacular fall from power of a personally popular native-born Governor. They search for reasons for the first attack on a British fort, Castle William and Mary in 1774, and for the Fifth Provincial Congress’s assumption of government in early 1775. A cursory examination would suggest that New Hampshire was in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. In actuality, the colony can be described best as parochial and apolitical until 1774.

For over 150 years, historians have been grappling with these contradictions. Of the many books and articles written about revolutionary New Hampshire, five historians stand out for their interpretations of New Hampshire’s role in the war. They are Jeremy Belknap, Richard Upton, Jackson T. Main, James K. Martin, and Jere Daniel.  

As a group, these historians focus their attention on the colonial leadership and the colony’s response at the provincial level to the crisis with Great Britain. Their discussion of local events in contrast is generally limited to those activities which resulted in a document--a petition or pamphlet--or to events reported in the colony’s newspapers, the New Hampshire Gazette, the Portsmouth Mercury, or the Freeman’s Journal.

Jeremy Belknap created the standard for New
Hampshire historians. Belknap, the Congregational minister in Dover, New Hampshire, from 1767 to 1776, published his seminal *History of New Hampshire* between 1784 and 1792. As minister and town resident, he was a participant in many of the revolutionary activities he later chronicled. Yet when he wrote his history, he chose to discuss the Revolution in an imperial context. Like his Massachusetts contemporary, Mercy Otis Warren, Belknap believed that the American Revolution was the result of a conspiracy by King and Parliament to deprive American colonists of their rights as Englishmen. As a result, Belknap focused his attention on British actions and the response to them in New Hampshire by Governor Wentworth, the General Assemblies and the Provincial Congresses. By doing so, he underestimated the importance of the town events he himself had participated in.

Belknap, who founded the Massachusetts Historical Society, was well known for collecting documents relating to the early history of New Hampshire. His conception of what was significant, however, limited the scope of his collection. While, as a private individual, Belknap had much to say about town events, he actively solicited from high public officials only those documents relating to colony or state affairs; he did not contact town officials with a similar request. Peter Force, compiler of *American Archives*, and the various editors of the
Documents and Records Relating to New Hampshire, mined Belknap's collection for their works. Until the mid-1930's Belknap's History and collections, along with Peter Force and the Documents and Records, formed the bases for all the histories of New Hampshire. As a result, no additional information on local activities surfaced.  

In 1936, Richard F. Upton presented a different interpretation of revolutionary activities in his Revolutionary New Hampshire. A product of the progressive school of American history, Upton believed that the American Revolution was both a war for independence from Great Britain and a struggle for control of the government between contending factions within each colony. Influenced by the works of Carl L. Becker and J. Franklin Jameson, Upton tested the Progressives' theory in New Hampshire. His conceptual framework detracted from the enduring quality of his work. Intent on a search for class conflict between revolutionaries and loyalists, Upton divided the two groups on the basis of socio-economic characteristics and political philosophy. Based on the differences between the two groups, as well as post-revolutionary "advances in liberal ideas"--education, communication, religious toleration, and anti-slavery sentiment--Upton concluded that in New Hampshire the paramount conflict of the period was over who should rule at home.
Upton wrote a good account of New Hampshire's entry into the war, based on published and manuscript sources. He discussed some town actions, but downplayed their significance by couching them in terms of class conflict. Revolutionary New Hampshire was republished in 1971. Upton did not change the text, but wrote a new introduction. In it he acknowledged Bernard Bailyn's contribution in The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, published in 1967. As a result of Bailyn's work, Upton admitted that his revolutionaries may have been motivated by ideology, and not simply by the struggle for political power.  

Later Jackson T. Main and James K. Martin, both neo-Progressives, seized upon class conflict—the most dated element in Upton's study—and used that theme as the focus of their works. Both men analyzed the revolution at the provincial level. Main, in a series of books and articles, concluded that the American Revolution was indeed a "democratic movement." His New Hampshire evidence seemed to support his theory. Main categorized representatives to the General Assemblies and Provincial Congresses according to his model for determining social class developed in his The Social Structure of Revolutionary America. He concluded that the differences in socio-economic characteristics, especially wealth and occupation, between New Hampshire representatives to the General Assemblies and to the
Provincial Congresses were so great, that the change could be described as "radical." Furthermore, he argued, the change was a deliberate attempt by the masses to gain control of the government. This trend was reversed by a conservative reaction in the Fifth Provincial Congress, which resolved itself into the First House of Representatives.13

Main's examination of the New Hampshire Council led him to similar conclusions. The new Council selected in 1776 was democratic not only because men of "middling sort" were selected, but also because seats on the Council were distributed according to a formula based on population per county. This resulted in a dispersion of power away from the seacoast area.14

James K. Martin used political prosopography to compare the last colonial rulers with the first group of top state officials. He concluded that New Hampshire's new state officials were leaders at the community level and had been representatives to the General Assembly. Frustrated by their inability to achieve higher office, these lesser officials, all able men, took advantage of the conflict with Great Britain, joined the patriot cause, and deliberately set out to create a new, more open government. In the process, the upwardly mobile lesser officials reserved the top positions for themselves.15

Only one full length study of revolutionary New
Hampshire has appeared since Upton's work. Jered Daniell's *Experiment in Republicanism*, published in 1970, was directly influenced by the work of Bernard Bailyn.16 Daniell, a neo-Whig historian, analyzed the revolution in New Hampshire within an imperial context. His focus was to show the relationship of ideas to actions. Through an examination of public and private writings—letters, pamphlets, public pronouncements, newspaper articles—he concluded that in New Hampshire revolutionaries were fighting to preserve what they felt were the rights of Englishmen. They were acting in the Republican tradition of James Trenchard, Thomas Gordon, and other "commonwealthmen" identified by Bailyn as key sources of revolutionary thought. Loyalists were fighting to preserve the existing relationship with Great Britain, although many of them privately felt that the imperial system needed reform. To Daniell, the Revolutionary War was a constitutional struggle between the colonies and Great Britain. Divisions of opinion based on class or section, as well as democratic reforms, were incidental to the main focus of the constitutional struggle.17

Daniell's *Experiment* is perhaps the most balanced view of New Hampshire's involvement in the Revolution produced to date. However, his concentration on ideas and their implementation necessarily limited his focus to verbal behavior. Daniell neglected town actions which did not result in public documents because they did not
fit his approach.

By focusing on New Hampshire's response to the Revolution at the provincial level, Belknap, Upton, Main, Martin, and Daniell failed to analyze the local bases of the Revolution. For them, the significant events of revolutionary New Hampshire occurred in Portsmouth and Exeter. They analyzed the decisions of men they identified as leaders, but they did not describe the relationship between those men and the towns they represented. Consequently their readers miss an important facet of the Revolution in New Hampshire.

As early as 1910 James O. Lyford, in an address at the eighty-eighth annual meeting of the New Hampshire Historical Society, called for an investigation of the local bases of the state's history. To date, Lyford's challenge has not been met. Still unknown is the process that explained how towns and local people transferred their allegiance from their beloved Governor John Wentworth to a revolutionary organization; the process that explained how the revolutionary government was created; or the process that explained why a particular man became a leader.18

To understand that process, I started, as others had done, at the top, and worked down. Borrowing approaches from Robert Zemsky and Jack Greene, I developed a method to identify leaders within New Hampshire legislative bodies. This method also enabled me to trace a man's
rise to a position of leadership. As a result of this investigation, several men emerged as leaders who have generally been overlooked by other historians.19

Following James K. Martin and the classical work of Lewis Namier, I developed a composite biography for the 295 representatives who served from 1765 through 1776.20 With this approach I was able to make comparisons between groups of men and to determine characteristics towns felt their representatives should possess. Finally, I plunged into the town records, looking for references in town meetings to revolutionary activities. My reading of the town records raised new questions—questions about the towns' expectations from their government.

This study, then, is an attempt to put the pieces together to assemble a new mosaic, to understand the process of the coming of the Revolution in New Hampshire by analyzing the relationship of the towns to the General Assemblies and Provincial Congresses. The new mosaic contains the familiar elements of the old, but what emerges is a picture of a colony that hesitantly entered into revolutionary activities, of a revolutionary government that reluctantly assumed power, and of a state government that effectively crushed proposals that would have eliminated property qualifications for office holders and would have allowed each town at least one delegate in the new House of Representatives.
CHAPTER NOTES


5. Ibid., chaps. 24 and 25, passim; Mercy Otis Warren, History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, 3 vols. (Boston, 1805).


8. Carl L. Becker, The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776 (Madison, 1903); J.


17. Daniell, *Experiment in Republicanism*, chaps. 5 and 6 passim.


CHAPTER I

THE LEGISLATURE AND ITS LEADERS

Historians of revolutionary New Hampshire, Jeremy Belknap, Richard F. Upton, Jackson T. Main, James K. Martin, and Jere Daniell all agree that members of the General Assemblies and the Provincial Congresses engineered the attack against royal authority. Furthermore, they identify specific men responsible for the challenge. Any subsequent discussion then of the process of the Revolution in New Hampshire must begin with an analysis of the structure, operating procedure, and leadership of the General Assembly and its counterpart, the Provincial Congress.

Though created by the Crown, the Assembly was the creature of the towns. At a time when news traveled only as fast and far as a man could travel, townsmen expected their representatives to structure and articulate their concerns, and to present their views to the world beyond their borders. They relied upon their representatives for information about events or actions affecting the towns and the colony. They elected their local leaders to represent them and they accepted as leaders men that
other towns had elected. Even those towns that were not entitled to representation looked to the Assembly for guidance and counsel.

The New Hampshire legislature met every three years as a result of the Triennial Act passed in 1728. Like the British Parliament it was bicameral. When the legislature sat, the New Hampshire Council, which also functioned as the governor's advisory board, acted as the upper house of the Assembly. The Council in New Hampshire, like that in many other colonies, was appointed by the King, upon the recommendation of the governor.1

The Governor, backed by the King's special instructions of June 13, 1748, claimed the right to determine which towns could be represented in the Assembly. The Assembly never agreed that selecting towns was the governor's prerogative, although after 1752 it chose not to question him. However, it reopened the debate in 1775 to challenge the supposed prerogative.2

When it was time to call an Assembly, the Governor notified the sheriff to issue writs of election to the selectmen of the authorized towns. The selectmen in turn called the town meetings. Those qualified to vote elected a moderator to conduct the proceedings. Polling was either by secret ballot or publicly, by a show of hands. After the election was completed, the selectmen returned the writ to the sheriff, listing the names of
the successful candidates. The sheriff passed the writs along to the Assembly.3

The members of the House of Representatives claimed the right to review election proceedings to determine whether a man was properly elected. The House could ask a town for an explanation, order an investigation, or call a new election. The Governor's last challenge to these rights occurred in 1735.4

Once the representatives had taken the oath of office, they elected the Speaker of the House. The speaker's position was very important. As the presiding officer of the House, he recognized men who wanted to speak, directed the flow of debate, and cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. He appointed representatives to committees, but New Hampshire's surviving records do not record that action.5

The governor had to approve the choice of the speaker. No business could be considered without one. The Governor and the Assembly quarreled in 1749 over whether the governor's approval was a formality or an actual right. The issue remained unsettled, but the Governor never disapproved another speaker, although on occasion, he approved with reservations.6

The representatives also chose a clerk who had the responsibility of keeping a journal of the proceedings of the House. In 1749, the representatives elected Meshech Wears, a member of the House to this post. This
set a precedent; in succeeding years, the clerk was always a member of the Assembly.\textsuperscript{7}

Each new Assembly adopted a set of rules to govern its conduct. The rules ensured that debates would proceed in an orderly fashion and guaranteed each representative an opportunity to state his opinions. The speaker was obligated to enforce the rules. He could reprimand legislators who spoke out of turn, insulted another member, or were absent without leave.\textsuperscript{8}

The Assembly received most of its business from two sources, namely requests from the governor and petitions from citizens and towns. The requests from the governor did not vary much from session to session. As a result of his commission and special instructions, the governor was required to request bills in a few routine areas: his salary, currency, taxes, defense, and maintenance of Castle William and Mary.\textsuperscript{9}

The petitions received from citizens and towns were more varied. They ranged from private matters, such as requests for a divorce or a judgment on the ownership of a cow, to such public issues as a request for the formation of a new parish to a petition for incorporation as a town. Towns also directed petitions to the governor, for example, petitions to have a Justice of the Peace or to be represented in the Assembly. With the collapse of royal government, these petitions were directed to the Provincial Congresses and later to the
new House of Representatives. 10

As the population of the colony increased, so did the work of the Assembly. In the colonial period, the legislature, with a maximum of thirty-four members, was never an unwieldy body. Gradually, however, the committee method was introduced to facilitate the task of legislating. By Governor Benning Wentworth’s administration almost all of the important work of the Assembly was done by committees, either House committees alone or joint committees of both the House and Council. Committees met separately from the main group and reported the results of their work to the whole body. If the committee was created to draft a bill, the entire Assembly voted on the committee’s proposal. Often times, however, committees had authority to make binding decisions.

Until 1773 all committees were ad hoc—that is they were established for a specific purpose. The committee ceased to exist when that function was completed or when the Assembly was adjourned or dissolved. On May 28, 1773, the Assembly created its first standing committee—a Committee of Correspondence. A standing committee had more than one charge, functioned between sessions of an Assembly, and could meet between the time one Assembly was dissolved and another was convened. The Fourth Provincial Congress created another type of committee—the Committee of the Whole. Committees of the Whole were
the entire Congress or it could be representatives from one geographic area of the colony meeting together to decide a particular matter—usually military matters.\textsuperscript{11}

Assemblymen were paid for their services. The amount paid was split between their town which provided a stipend and the Assembly which paid a \textit{per diem}, a daily allowance to cover living expenses away from home. The \textit{per diem} was taken out of the colony's tax revenue. Because the towns initiated most of the Assembly's business and directly or indirectly paid the representatives, citizens felt they had the right to question publicly the conduct of legislators. A month after Governor John Wentworth convened his first session of the Assembly, an anonymous writer posed the following query in the \textit{New Hampshire Gazette}. "Whether every Gentleman who is chosen, and accepts that Tryal [Trial], ought not to prefer, and attend the public Service for which he was chosen, before his private Affairs, when they interfer?" Such criticism reminded legislators that they served at the will of their town. The members' primary responsibility was to their constituency.\textsuperscript{12}

Royal government in New Hampshire essentially ended in August 1775 when Governor John Wentworth left the colony. By January 1776, the colony had a new government, which both in form and function, was virtually indistinguishable from the old, with one conspicuous exception. It consisted of a House of
Representatives and a Council, but it lacked a governor.

The new government was created out of the Fifth Provincial Congress. The Provincial Congresses, New Hampshire's revolutionary legislatures, were conscious duplications of the General Assemblies. The process for participation was basically the same. Now the Committee of Correspondence sent notices to the town selectmen who held local elections. Once convened, the delegates chose a president, another name for speaker, to conduct the meetings. By the Fourth Provincial Congress, delegates chose a secretary, another name for clerk. They also adopted a set of rules, reviewed the credentials of delegates, and after Governor Wentworth left the colony, voted to pay themselves for their services.¹³

The Committee of Correspondence called the first three Provincial Congresses for specific purposes—to elect delegates to the First Continental Congress, to elect delegates once more to the Second Continental Congress, and to devise defensive measures in reaction to the outbreak of conflict in Lexington and Concord. The representatives primarily discussed only those issues and their meetings were short, lasting from one to several days.

The Fourth Provincial Congress, which began in May 1775, was quite different. It met for six months, overlapping the meetings of Governor Wentworth's last General Assembly. Some men attended both meetings.
Since the Assembly and the Governor were deadlocked over the admission of delegates from three previously unrepresented towns, the Assembly refused to discuss any other issues. Towns that had problems or concerns had nowhere to turn, other than to the Fourth Provincial Congress. Gradually, the Congress acted upon some town requests.14

The Fourth Provincial Congress developed a plan for representation for the Fifth Provincial Congress. By the time the latter group met in December 1775, it was obvious that royal government had ended in New Hampshire. The Congress was now indisputably in charge. The entire transition from colony to state had taken twenty-four months and was accomplished in an orderly fashion. The Congresses' deliberate attempt to keep a familiar structure, procedure, and function made it easier for townsmen to accept the change.

Traditionally, historians have had a difficult time identifying legislative leaders. Ideally one would hope to find manuscript sources in which various representatives recorded that they had been influenced by a speech, argument, or favor from another legislator. If such evidence exists for New Hampshire, it has not been found. Most historians, therefore, have narrowed their definition of leadership to include only those who held the top government offices. A few, when appropriate, have borrowed techniques for identifying
leaders from sister disciplines.

One such technique is called by political scientists "structural analysis." It begins with the assumption that men who were appointed to committees were more likely to be leaders than men who were not. Not all committee assignments are equal; one can make finer distinctions among legislators by analyzing the functions of committees.

Structural analysis is not a perfect way of identifying political leaders. It can not tell us what "leadership" meant to societies or individuals. Nor can it tell us why a man was appointed to a committee. It can tell us that a particular group of men were very active, and would be recognized by name and face by other members of the legislature. Since the majority of the work of the Assembly was conducted by committees, we do know that committeemen had a greater opportunity to influence, persuade, and to exercise authority than non-committeemen.15

Jack Greene and Robert Zemsky were among the first historians to apply structural analysis to colonial American legislative committees. Both recognized the defects of the system. Armed with their caveats, I approached the records of the New Hampshire General Assemblies and Provincial Congresses.16

Two questions had to be asked to decide if structural analysis was a viable option to study
leadership in New Hampshire. The first was, "Were committee assignments rotated so that each man received the same number of assignments?" The answer was an emphatic no. Many men attended Assemblies and Congresses without receiving a single assignment, except possibly participating on a Committee of the Whole.17

The second question was, "Were committees created for all types of legislative business?" The answer was yes. Both the General Assemblies and Provincial Congresses created committees which discussed issues important only to a single town, as well as those which had inter-colony significance. A sample of Ebenezer Thompson's assignments illustrates the diversity of committees. Thompson was elected to the Assembly in 1766 to replace the recently deceased Joseph Smith. He served in the Assembly until the end of royal government and simultaneously represented Durham in the Provincial Congresses. Thompson served on a committee to draw the dividing line between the old and new parish in Hampton Falls, a committee to prepare a bill providing for the creation of roads from the interior of the colony to the seacoast, a committee to instruct delegates to the Continental Congress, and a committee of the whole to elect area military officers. He was appointed to the Committee of Correspondence and as part of that committee wrote a letter to the Continental Congress analyzing the general condition of the colony, and issued the call for
a new Provincial Congress. He was appointed secretary of
the Fifth Provincial Congress and elected a councilor by
the first House of Representatives. Thompson later
represented New Hampshire in the Continental Congress.18

Thompson's assignments indicate the typical business
coming before the Assemblies and Congresses. They ranged
from the routine, such as the parish border in Hampton
Falls, to the extra-ordinary, such as calling a session
of the Provincial Congress.

On the basis of the answers to my preliminary
questions, I decided to apply structural analysis to the
New Hampshire Assemblies and Congresses. The first task
was to rank the committees according to importance.
Because the southern colonies had standing committees
prior to the Revolution, Jack Greene's method of ranking
was not appropriate for New Hampshire. I modified his
method and developed a ten point scale for New Hampshire
committees.

Table I presents a list of Ebenezer Thompson's
assignments and illustrates the ranking method. The
first column lists Thompson's assignments; column two
lists the points assigned for the assignment; column
three, an adaptation of Greene's scale, gives the broad
category that covers the assignment.

Using my modified Greene scale, I analyzed the
committee assignments for the 296 men who served in any
of the General Assemblies and Provincial Congresses
Table I

RANKING OF EBENEZER THOMPSON'S APPOINTMENTS
USING STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Assignment Or Other Appointment</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-to select area military officers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole - whole group or one area meets to discuss one subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-to draw a dividing line between old and new parish in Hampton Falls.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Routine Matters - local issues, ownership of property, all delivering of messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-to prepare a bill providing for the creation of roads from the interior of the colony to the coast.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Major Committee - committees which deal with issues affecting all of N.H., but which do not set policy or deal with finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-to instruct delegates to the Continental Congress.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extraordinary Committee - broad policy on internal affairs of N.H. and N.H. and other colonies and N. H. and England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Committee of Safety writes to Continental Congress analyzing conditions in colony.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minor action of a Standing Committee - broad policy on internal affairs, etc. (same as 4). Given a higher number because fewer people are given the authority to make the decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Committee of Safety calls a session of the Provincial Congress.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Major action of a Standing Committee - call a provincial congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Appointed to the Committee of Safety.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Extrasessionary Committee- N.H. standing committee that may operate between sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Secretary of the Provincial Congress.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N.H. House officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Delegate to Continental Congress.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Delegate to the Continental Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Councilor.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N.H. Councilor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
convened between 1765 and 1776 and assigned each delegate a total score for each session he attended. The total score was the sum of the representative's individual committee scores. The total scores for all men who served in each particular session, for example Benning Wentworth's final Assembly, were then arranged in ascending order. The procedure resulted in a ranking on the session list which reflected a man's potential influence in relationship to other's attending the same session.  

Table II, the session list for Benning Wentworth's last Assembly, which met between May 21, 1765, and March 24, 1768, illustrates the procedure. Thirty-four delegates attended. Joseph Smith, a Durham farmer, died on July 16, 1765, before receiving any assignments. The least active representatives were Jonathan Church from Barrington and Howard Henderson from Dover. Each served on only one committee--both were appointed to deliver a message to the Governor.

Meshech Weare, a Hampton Falls lawyer who was first elected to the Assembly in 1745, performed the most work. In the 1765 Assembly he replaced Andrew Clarkson as clerk after Clarkson died. He served on several committees to prepare bills to divide the colony into counties, a joint committee to write to King George III thanking him for repealing the Stamp Act, and other committees dealing with colony finances including one on
Table II

SESSION LIST FOR BENNING WENTWORTH'S LAST ASSEMBLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislator's Name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Smith</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Church</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Henderson</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Bell</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Burley</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Underwood</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Chamberlain</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Webster</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Jenness</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Carleton</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Knowles</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Moulton</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Thompson</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Wiggin</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Downing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Merrill</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Wright</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Barr</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Worthen</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. March</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Clarkson</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Toppan</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Wentworth</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Sherburne</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Bartlett</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Goffe</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sherburne</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Waldron</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Sheafe</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Giddings</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Gilman</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Parker</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Weare</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary: Legislators = 34.  
Value of Assignments = 822.

Source: NHSP.
the Governor's salary. In addition, he was on several committees to deliver oral messages to the Governor and Council. His large score, 143, reflects not only the importance of the committee assignments he held, but also the number of assignments he held. No other delegate was as busy as Weare.20

The distribution pattern for committee assignments evident in Benning Wentworth's last Assembly was normal for the period. In each of the other legislative sessions, a very few men performed most of the work. Statisticians have developed a number of tests to measure the degree of "equality" of a distribution. One simple graphic representation is a Lorenz Curve. Figure 1, for example, is a graph of the Lorenz Curve for Benning Wentworth's last legislative session.

In Figure 1, the horizontal axis indicates the accumulated percentage of members; the vertical axis on the right hand side of the grid, indicates the accumulated percentage of assignments. The points on the graph are obtained from information on the session list. The first point at the bottom left represents Joseph Smith. Smith made up 2.34 percent of the total membership of the session [1 ÷ 34 * 100]. He received 0 percent of the assignments [0 ÷ 022 * 100]. The second point includes not only Smith, but also information for Jonathan Church. Church and Smith together represent 5.88 percent of the membership [2.94% for Smith + 2.94%
Figure 1

Lorenz Curve for Benning Wentworth's Last Legislative Session

Source: NHSP
for Church] and .24 percent of the assignments [0% for Smith + .24% for Church]. The third point culminates data for Smith, Church, and Howard Henderson. All three represent 8.82 percent of the membership [2.94% for Smith + 2.94% for Church + 2.94% for Henderson] and .48 percent of the assignments [0% for Smith + .24% for Church + .24% for Henderson]. The process continues in this way until the last point, where data for Meshech Weare is added to the plot. With Weare added, the graph shows 100 percent of the membership and 100 percent of the assignments.

The broken line on the graph denotes the Line of Perfect Equality. If the committee assignments had been rotated equally among the members of Benning Wentworth's last Assembly, the resulting curve would have fallen on the Line of Perfect Equality. For example, 20 percent of the members would have received 20 percent of the assignments; 50 percent of the members would have received 50 percent of the assignments. The area between the curve constructed from the Wentworth session list and the Line of Perfect Equality is a visual representation of how unequally assignments actually were distributed.

One way to compare sessions is to construct individual Lorenz Curves and place them on top of each other. The same results can be achieved by calculating a Gini Index and comparing the scores. A Gini Index is a mathematical measure: the ratio of the area beneath the actual curve to the area beneath the Line of Perfect
Equality. Had the assignments in Benning Wentworth’s last Assembly been distributed equally, the Gini score would have been 0.0. The actual score was .507.

Once we have constructed Lorenz Curves, we can begin to make some conclusions about leadership. Again statisticians come to our aid. Using the concept of "minimal majority," defined as "the smallest number of individuals who taken together control at least one-half of the value being distributed," we can identify legislative leaders. The decision to use minimal majority as a controlling factor is an admittedly arbitrary, though widely accepted, measure. It provides a common-sense way of identifying leaders that can be applied to any legislative group using committees. It is unbiased and flexible in that it does not define in advance the size of the leadership group, but lets the records speak for themselves.21

Figure 2 illustrates how the concept of minimal majority works. The figure shows the Lorenz Curve for Benning Wentworth’s last Assembly with leaders, sub-leaders, and backbenchers indicated. To get the minimal majority, find the 50 percent mark on the vertical axis on the right hand side of the grid, move left to the curve and then down to the horizontal axis. Seven men controlled 50 percent of the assignments. These are designated the leaders for this session. They were Henry Sherburne, Thomas W. Waldron, Jacob Sheafe, John
Figure 2

Lorenz Curve for Benning Wentworth’s Last Legislative Session

Source: NHSP

Gini Index = .507
Giddings, Peter Gilman, William Parker (from Portsmouth), and Meshach Weare. Sub-leaders were those men who received the next 25 percent of the assignments, and were identified by starting at the 25 percent point on the vertical axis on the right hand side of the grid. They were Andrew Clarkson, Christopher Toppan, John Wentworth, John Sherburne, Josiah Bartlett, and John Goffe. Backbenchers were the remainder of the group, those listed from John Smith through Clement March on the Session List in Table II.

How does this measure of leadership compare with leaders identified in more traditional ways? At this point, we are forced to compare only revolutionary leaders, as no one has focused much attention on those Assembly leaders who become neither Patriots nor active Tories.

Table III lists the revolutionary leaders identified through structural analysis and compares them with those leaders identified by Belknap, Upton, Martin, and Daniell. These historians have focused on those men who secured the highest positions in the new government created in 1776. The lists are quite similar. The similarity gives us confidence in structural analysis as a valid way of identifying leaders. Those names which appear only on the structural analysis list are men who served in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Provincial Congresses and the first House of Representatives.
### Table III

MAJOR REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Structural Analysis</th>
<th>Belknap, Upton, Daniels, Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Weare</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Wentworth</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Cutts</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Bartlett</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Folsom</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Thompson</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Thornton</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Whipple</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. White</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. Long</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Morey</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Moulton</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Claggett</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Dudley</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Walker, Jr.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Gilman</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. McClary</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Langdon</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Sullivan</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Livermore</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Ashley</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Giles</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Hubbard</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Blanchard</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hurd</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Sparhawk</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Dearburne</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Gilman</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Sherburne</td>
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<td>J. Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Baldwin</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Lovewell</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Prentice</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. McGregor</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Giddings</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Code: xx - most important leaders; x - leader; * - delegates to the Continental Congress, in sessions with incomplete delegate lists.
Turnover in these groups was high as some men abandoned legislative careers to serve in the army and some towns were forced to combine with others to elect one delegate. The results of the structural analysis confirms Belknap’s, Upton’s, Daniell’s, and Martin’s focus on Meshech Weare, Josiah Bartlett, Ebenezer Thompson, Nathaniel Folsom, and Matthew Thornton as protagonists of the Revolution, but they should have classified two other men as major revolutionary leaders. The results also enable us to trace the development of all revolutionary leaders. In addition, structural analysis enables us to identify men as leaders who have previously been ignored by other historians.

The two men who should be added to New Hampshire’s list of most significant revolutionary leaders are John Wentworth, the Governor’s cousin, and Samuel Cutts. In the critical months between the passage of the Tea Act and Governor Wentworth’s departure from the colony, John Wentworth directed New Hampshire’s response to all inter-colony and international events.

Wentworth, a merchant, was elected to the Assembly in 1749. The Assembly which convened on May 22, 1771, elected him speaker. His career as an opposition leader began in this session. In the spring of 1773, John Wentworth received two letters calling for the creation of a Committee of Correspondence in all colonies. The House established a Committee of Correspondence and John
Wentworth was a member. 22

The next Assembly, which convened on April 7, 1774, unanimously elected John Wentworth speaker, and it created a new Committee of Correspondence. Again Wentworth was a member, and as chairman of the Committee, Wentworth issued the calls for the first four Provincial Congresses. He chaired all but the Fourth which he was too ill to attend.23

Members of Governor Wentworth's last Assembly, convened on May 5, 1775, again elected John Wentworth speaker. During this brief session, Wentworth was on a committee to meet with the Governor to ask for an adjournment. This appears to be an unimportant assignment. However the reason for the adjournment was to allow representatives who had also been elected to the Fourth Provincial Congress the time to travel to Exeter to attend the meeting.24

Wentworth also served on a committee to prepare an answer to the Governor's opening address. This too was a matter requiring great tact. The Governor had appealed to the Assembly as "the only constitutional and legal Representatives of the People" and urged a "Restoration of our Harmony with Great Britain." The committee's response to the Governor was not encouraging. While acknowledging the colonies' deep ties with England, the committee blamed the mother country for the difficulties. When the Fifth Provincial Congress
resolved itself into the first House of Representatives, it elected John Wentworth a councilor.  

Samuel Cutts, is another leader whose influence has been underestimated by historians. Cutts, a Portsmouth merchant involved in the West Indies trade, was first elected to the April 7, 1774, Assembly, Governor Wentworth's third. Shortly after his election, Cutts received a long list of instructions passed at a town meeting. The first urged "... a Correspondence be carefully kept up, between colonies, the better to promote & strengthen a general union. ..." It is impossible to know how seriously Cutts took the instructions, but he was appointed to the New Hampshire Committee of Correspondence.  

Cutts was reappointed to the Committee of Correspondence by the representatives to the Second Provincial Congress. In the Fourth Provincial Congress, Cutts was appointed to a new standing committee, the Committee of Supplies. He spent most of his time securing provisions for war. In the Fifth Provincial Congress, which became the first House of Representatives, Cutts routinely substituted for absent House officers. At the end of the session, he was appointed to the Committee of Safety.  

It is possible to use the lists of legislators generated by structural analysis to trace a delegate's rise to leadership. Considering the entire period of the
challenge to royal authority, launched in 1765 and concluded by the end of 1775, we can rank the importance of the major revolutionary leaders in this order: Meshech Weare, John Wentworth, Samuel Cutts, Josiah Bartlett and Nathaniel Folsom, Ebenezer Thompson, and Matthew Thornton.

Table IV shows the sessions the seven major leaders attended and classifies them as leader, sub-leader, backbencher, or councilor. An examination shows that Weare was a leader in every session he attended. As previously noted, John Wentworth assumed a leadership role in Governor John Wentworth's second Assembly. The controversial issues then were the Tea Act and the creation of the first Committee of Correspondence. Samuel Cutts joined Meshech Weare and John Wentworth as a leader in Governor Wentworth's third Assembly. Again the main source of controversy was the selection of a new Committee of Correspondence.

Josiah Bartlett and Nathaniel Folsom joined the leadership circle at the First Provincial Congress. Both had been members of the Assembly the Governor had dissolved. Presumably they could have attended the meeting to plan the First Provincial Congress. The Congress elected Folsom to represent New Hampshire at the Continental Congress; Bartlett was on the committee to write Folsom's instructions.

At the Second Provincial Congress, Ebenezer Thompson
Table IV

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS 1765-1776

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>B. Wentworth</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>B</th>
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<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<tr>
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<td>L</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 21, 1774</td>
<td>L*</td>
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<td>L*</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17, 1775</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Code:
- L : Leader
- L* : Received assignments in session. Records incomplete.
- S : Sub-leader
- B : Backbencher
- C : Councilor
- N : Did not attend
- A : Attended, no assignment

Portsmouth Town Records, v.2, pt.2, p.303A
Durham Town Records, v.2, p.79
received a major assignment. He was appointed to the New Hampshire Committee of Correspondence. All of the major leaders, except Matthew Thornton, were present at this Congress; all received assignments.

Thornton, a physician, was the last to join the leadership group. He represented Londonderry in the Third Provincial Congress and had not held legislative office since 1758, when he served one term in the Assembly. Thornton joined the Congress late and received an assignment on the day he arrived—a place on the committee to answer Massachusetts Bay's request for aid. On May 2, the Congress elected Thornton president pro tempore to replace John Wentworth who was ill. Only two other men besides Weare, Wentworth, Bartlett, Folsom, Thompson, and Thornton obtained a leadership position in this session. By the end of the Third Provincial Congress, the core revolutionary group was completed.

These seven men, sharing power among themselves and with others, continued their leadership role in New Hampshire's next three legislative sessions—one Assembly and two Congresses. They were influential in all decisions which helped create the structure of New Hampshire's new government.28

Structural analysis as a technique for identifying leaders is especially valuable when applied to the Third and Fourth Provincial Congresses and the First House of Representatives. These groups experienced a very high turnover. Men served, made a significant contribution in
one or two sessions, and disappeared—generally into the army. Their assistance in the critical years of 1775 and 1776 is now forgotten. Consider, for example, the careers of Nathaniel Prentice and Nahum Baldwin.

Nathaniel Prentice’s first legislative experience was as a delegate to the Fourth Provincial Congress. A farmer from Alstead, he was his town’s first representative. In the Fourth Provincial Congress, he was a backbencher, but he served on one of three committees to develop a plan for representation at the Fifth Provincial Congress. In the First House of Representatives, Prentice secured a position on the Ways and Means Committee and was added to the Committee of Safety. Military arrangements occupied most of his time, but he was also on a committee to try a group of Tories. Later Prentice was appointed to the new Committee of Safety, but his legislative career was cut short when he accepted a commission in the army. In the House Prentice ranked second in leadership score only to the leading member, Timothy Walker, Jr.²⁹

Nahum Baldwin’s career paralleled Prentice’s. Baldwin, a farmer representing Amherst, had no legislative experience when he was elected to the Fifth Provincial Congress. His only town experience was as a selectman in 1769. Baldwin received his first assignment on January 10, 1776, when he was appointed to a committee to decide the wages of the House and Council. Thereafter, he served on several committees dealing with
finances. He delivered money to the army and investigated an outbreak of smallpox in Exeter. By November 1776, Baldwin was in the army.\textsuperscript{30}

Baldwin too was classified as a leader in the Fifth Provincial Congress. He and Prentice were typical of many of the men who served during the war. The turnover made legislating more difficult, but it did not prevent men with recognized ability from achieving top positions and making significant contributions.

Using structural analysis to examine committee assignments has a distinct advantage for one interested in the process of the Revolution. The procedure identifies all the leaders of the period, not just the revolutionary leaders. By analyzing the changes in the leadership group, we can make some initial conclusions about the time and issues which divided Patriots from Tories or neutrals. Viewed from this perspective, the legislative careers of Woodbury Langdon, Jacob Sheafe, John Sherburne, and others assume new importance.

Regardless of their political views or aspirations, all representatives had one characteristic in common. Their political base was their town. There they received their education in the business of politics. There they first practiced what they learned. By examining the relationship of legislators to their towns, we can begin to profile the process of the Revolution in New Hampshire.
Chapter Notes

1. The best description of the operation of New Hampshire's government during the royal period is William Fry, New Hampshire as a Royal Province, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, vol. 29 (New York, 1908). The description of the legislature which follows is based upon Chapter 3 of Fry's work.

2. NHSP, 6:02, and 7:373.

3. For examples of these practices, see Somersworth Town Records, vol. 1, p. 245, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire State Library, (hereafter cited as NHSL), and New Castle Town Records, Box labeled New Castle to New Hampton, Concord, N.H., Division of Records and Archives, (hereafter cited as NHA).


5. See NHSP, 7:292 for the duties of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.


7. Fry, Royal Province, pp. 142-143.

8. See NHSP, 7:292 for an example of House rules.

10. To gain a flavor of town and individual petitions to their government, see Legislative Petitions, Record Group III, NHA.

11. NHSP, 7:332, 575.


14. See, for example, NHSP, 7:535, 549.

15. For an explanation of legislative leadership from the perspective of political scientists see Eugene J. Kolb, A Framework For Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1978), pp. 219-281 passim.


17. Since I wanted any results I might obtain to be comparable to those for other colonies, I followed as precisely as possible Greene's and Zemsky's research design. My initial questions and the order in which I proceeded were a deliberate duplication of Zemsky's method. The explanation of my procedure is a close paraphrase of Zemsky's found in his "Statistical Appendix" to Merchants, Farmers, and River Gods, pp. 285-300.

18. NHSP, 7:163, 276, 470, 477, 506, 575 and 8:969.
19. A factor not accounted for in my method of identifying leaders is a man's record of attendance. Consistent data could not be found for all sessions. This was especially true for the Provincial Congresses. When records were available, the number of days a man attended was recorded, but not the specific days.

20. NHSP, 7:59-165 passim.


22. NHSP, 7:286, 332.


27. NHSP, 7:442, 478 and 8: 7, 154, 344.

28. Ibid., 7:461.


30. Ibid, 8:10, 94, 109, 151, 334; Daniel F. Secomb, History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire (Concord, N.H., 1883), passim.
TOWNS BECOME AWARE OF THE PROBLEM

. . . The People of the Province of New-Hampshire are well known to have supported the character of loyal Subjects of his Majesty, and have been distinguished for their Obedience to all Subordinate Officers, without carefully attending to the present popular Patriotism of this Country. So far from pushing themselves into the front on the present unhappy Disputes, they have been blamed for falling far in the Rear. . . .

December 23, 1774

The opinion of "A Lover of Order," published in the New Hampshire Gazette nine days after the attacks on Castle William and Mary in December 1774, summarizes the dilemma historians face when they try to explain New Hampshire's entry into the revolutionary fray. Until that month, New Hampshire had scarcely been touched by revolutionary activities. Here was a colony that had refused to send a representative to the Stamp Act Congress, and only mildly protested the arrival of the tax stamps in Portsmouth. Here was a colony whose many merchants continued to import goods from England during the time of the Townshend duties. Here was a colony whose members of the Council, the Assembly and the Portsmouth
Committee of Correspondence worked together to prevent violence when East India Company tea arrived. Strange, then, that here the first attack on a British fortification occurred. On two consecutive evenings, some 500 seacoast men raided Castle William and Mary and stripped the fort of ammunition and arms. The munitions were then hidden in several towns, and some of the gun powder was to be used later at Bunker Hill. \(^1\)

From a cursory examination of New Hampshire’s revolutionary activities, it appears that the raid on Castle William and Mary occurred in a vacuum. It was as if 500 men awoke one morning imbued with patriotic zeal and channelled that spirit into an attack on the fort. On the surface no obvious course of events led to this attack. Yet there had to be an underlying process at work that made people aware of the problems with Great Britain and defined for towns an acceptable mode of reacting to those problems. However, because it has all the elements of a good story, historians tend to focus on the raid on Castle William and Mary, ignoring the process that enabled it to occur.

This process begins with the creation of the first New Hampshire Committee of Correspondence on May 28, 1773. The committee formed the basis for the development of a revolutionary movement. The provincial committee served as a model for local committees of correspondence. The local committees developed relationships with both
the provincial committee and the Portsmouth committee. Members of local committees of correspondence who were also legislators were instrumental in creating New Hampshire's second Committee of Correspondence in May 1774. It was the second committee which defied the Governor and arranged a meeting to elect New Hampshire's delegates to the First Continental Congress.

In March 1773 Peyton Randolph, Speaker of the Virginia House of Burgesses, wrote to Speaker John Wentworth suggesting that each colony establish a standing Committee of Correspondence. The committees would share information on measures implemented by the British government to enforce its imperial policy. The House was not in session when Wentworth received the letter, but it was in session two months later when he received a similar letter from the Rhode Island Speaker of the House of Representatives.²

Speaker Wentworth had to make a decision. He knew that the Assembly was concerned with the colony's relationship to Great Britain. In January the Assembly heard a report outlining the difficulties between the colonies and the mother country, and a motion was made that the Assembly send a letter to Lord Dartmouth regarding the American situation. The motion passed and Wentworth was on the Assembly's committee charged to write to Dartmouth. The resulting letter was innocuous. After congratulating Dartmouth on his recent appointment as
"Secretary of State for his Majesty's Colonies in America," the writers continued.

We would not presume to intrude on your Lordship's time with a Disquisition of American Affairs, but while we deprecate its Disquietudes we also do the causes thereof and are morally sure on the removal of one the other would immediately cease.

The letter listed no specific grievances.³

Wentworth also knew that he could not allow personal feelings to interfere with Assembly business. His predecessor, Speaker Peter Gilman from Exeter, had gotten into difficulty with his town and the Assembly for that reason when he had held a letter from the House addressed to King George III, which criticized the Townshend duties, for almost two years before the Assembly forced him to post it.⁴

After careful consideration, Speaker Wentworth made his decision. He brought the letters he had received to the attention of the House on May 20, 1773. The House approved of the views contained in the letters and authorized the formation of a Committee of Correspondence. John Wentworth appointed William Parker, John Sherburne, Jacob Sheafe, John Gidding, and Simeon Alcott to prepare answers to the Virginia and Rhode Island letters. The committee quickly completed their work, drafted a response, and sent the same letter to both colonies, dated May 20. That same day Wentworth appointed the Committee of Correspondence. It consisted of himself,
Sherburne, Parker, Gidding, Sheafe, Christopher Toppan, and John Pickering. Four of the committee constituted a quorum. They were charged

... to obtain the most early & authentic Intelligence of all such acts & Resolutions of the British Parliament or proceedings of Administration as may relate to or affect the British Colonies in America, & to keep up & maintain a Correspondence & Communication with any sister Colonies...⁵

The next day Governor John Wentworth, having recently received his £700 salary for the year, recessed the House. By tradition, House committees ceased to exist when the Assembly recessed; this first Committee of Correspondence apparently followed tradition. There is no record that it met while the Assembly was adjourned. During the summer Speaker Wentworth received subsequent letters from Massachusetts Bay, Maryland, and Connecticut. These were not answered until February 11, 1774, when the House was back in session.⁶

An analysis of the proceedings of the Assembly suggests that the House intended that the Committee of Correspondence be a working committee, and that it was surprised when Governor Wentworth adjourned the Assembly. The men who served on the committee were among the most respected men in the colony. They were well established in their professions and occupations, respected within their towns, and well regarded within the Assembly. Governor Wentworth knew many of them personally, or knew of them. He had appointed all of them to judicial
positions. They were men who could be expected to act rationally in any situation. They were not hotheads.

William Parker, John Sherburne, and Jacob Sheafe were from Portsmouth. Parker was a lawyer; the others, along with Christopher Toppan from Hampton, were merchants involved in the West Indies trade. All had a long record of public service. Sheafe's father and both his grandfathers had been councilors. Sherburne's father had also been a councilor and his mother was a Wentworth. Parker was on a retainer for the Masonian proprietors. One of his daughters married Christopher Toppan. John Wentworth, from Somersworth, was the Governor's cousin. A wealthy landowner, his father and uncle had been representatives, and his son had read law under William Parker.7

John Giddinge from Exeter was trained as a physician, but he was also a very successful merchant involved in lumbering, shipbuilding, fishing, and the West Indies trade. His father had been a representative. Giddinge was married to Mehetabel Gilman, daughter of Councilor Peter Gilman who was related through marriage to the Governor. Simeon Alcott, on the letter writing committee, graduated from Yale in 1761. A Connecticut native, he moved to Charlestown where he practiced law and was active in town affairs. Alcott was a first term assemblyman.8

The fact that Simeon Alcott was left off the Committee of Correspondence and John Pickering included
supports the view that the committee was intended to be a working committee. Alcott lived over 100 miles from Portsmouth. It would be difficult for him to meet quickly in case of an emergency. Pickering, a Portsmouth lawyer, was not and never had been a member of the Assembly. He graduated from Harvard College in 1761 and was married to Abigale Sheafe, the daughter of Jacob Sheafe. With both Pickering and Parker living in Portsmouth, presumably at least one lawyer would be available to constitute a quorum if the committee had to meet.9

While a majority of the men involved with the First Committee of Correspondence remained loyal to the King, this does not mean that in 1773 they did not have real concerns about colonial administration, concerns they hoped could be resolved by petition and persuasion. This sure tactic had worked in the past, why not again? Parker and Sheafe had been members of the committee charged to write to George III outlining New Hampshire's objections to the Townshend Acts. Sheafe and Sherburne had signed petitions to request town meetings to deal with merchants who imported and sold British goods in Portsmouth. Both had served on a committee to draw up non-importation resolves. As a result of this type of activity throughout the thirteen colonies, Parliament repealed the Townshend duties, except for a tax on tea.10

With the Assembly adjourned between May 29, 1773, and January 11, 1774, New Hampshire citizens had no unified
means to express their reaction to the next crisis in Anglo-American relations—the Tea Act. The act, passed in May 1773, was Lord North's attempt to assist the financially strapped East India Company. By allowing the company to avoid export duties in London, the company could ship tea directly to the colonies and sell it at a lower price than that charged by a colonial merchant.

Many Americans were heavy tea drinkers. Tea rivaled cider and beer as a predominate beverage with meals, and it was thought to have medicinal uses, especially for women. Portsmouth merchants imported large quantities of tea. Most issues of the New Hampshire Gazette carried ads for "fine bohea teas." Colonial merchants who made their living by importing and selling tea feared a loss of income and jobs if Americans were given the option of purchasing quality tea at a lower price.\textsuperscript{11}

Six months before any East India Company tea reached New Hampshire, the colony was agitated, but because of the recess, the Assembly and the Committee of Correspondence could not take any action. This did not prevent individual legislators from expressing their own views. In Portsmouth Jacob Sheafe, a member of the provincial Committee of Correspondence, signed a petition requesting a town meeting "...to know what method the Inhabitants of said Portsmouth will adopt & pursue touching the Preventing the importation or Sale of any Teas... by the east India Company. ..."\textsuperscript{12}
In signing a petition to request a town meeting on tea, Jacob Sheafe assumed the role of an educator. In a public forum, he proposed to instruct his fellow townsmen on how this latest British act fit into Parliament's scheme to deprive American colonists of their rights.

The meeting was held on December 16, 1773, coincidentally on the same night as the Boston Tea Party. Portsmouth voters were divided on the purpose of the meeting. The first item of business was a vote on whether to continue the meeting. When the vote passed in the affirmative, the group in attendance adopted resolves pledging to "use every necessary method" to prevent tea from being landed in Portsmouth and called anyone who assisted the East India Company or who imported any tea "an Enemy to America."  

The argument against the Tea Act did not focus on the potential economic hardships to merchants. The unnamed framers of the resolves equated the duty the East India Company had to pay in the colonies with the other import duties of the Townshend Acts. Thus the Tea Act became another attempt by Parliament to tax the colonies without their consent.

At the same meeting the town elected a local Committee of Correspondence to publish the resolves and to send copies to "every considerable Town in this Government." Jacob Sheafe was a member of the committee. He was joined by John Sherburne, another of Portsmouth's
representatives. John Pickering was elected, but he refused to serve. He did not, however, dissent against the proceedings of the entire meeting as did six prominent Portsmouth residents.\(^\text{14}\)

The Portsmouth Resolves were printed in the *New Hampshire Gazette* on December 24. In December, January, and February, Exeter, New Castle, Dover, Greenland, Rochester, Somersworth, Stratham, Barrington, Haverhill, and Hampton held special town meetings to consider similar action on the Tea Act. These meetings were held at the request of the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence. The towns adopted Tea Resolves, not unlike those of Portsmouth, and also elected their own local Committees of Correspondence. The minutes of these meetings were published in the *New Hampshire Gazette* along with the names of the members of the committees.\(^\text{16}\)

The published tea resolves outlined for *Gazette* readers the perceived ministerial conspiracy to deprive British Americans of their rights as Englishmen. While acknowledging the sovereignty of King George III, the writers noted that no contract had been made between their ancestors and the British Parliament that allowed that body to tax the colonists. Instead the settlers had been given charters which established colonial assemblies. These miniature American parliaments alone, the colonists asserted, had the right to tax Americans. The English Parliament's attempt to tax the colonists was a knowing
violation of the British constitution which guaranteed that there would be no taxation without representation.

Parliament's taxes outraged men from the town of Rochester who felt that the money would be used "... to raise a Revenue to support a Number of Hungary Placemen, of what Denomination soever, that distress peaceable Subjects, and are a Pest to Society..." Rochester and other towns pledged that they would abstain from the use of tea and do their best to prevent the distribution of East India Company tea in the colony. Hampton residents went further, promising

",.. if ever Necessity requires it, we will be ready in Conjunction with our oppress'd American Brethren to risque our Lives and Interest in support of those Rights, Liberties, and Priviledges, which our Supreme Lawgiver, and our happy Constitution have entitled us to.16

Residents of Barrington summarized the temper of the colony best when they stated in the introduction to their resolves

",.. the Consumption of that detestable barb is inconsiderable [inconsiderable] here when Compared with populous [populous] Towns, yet as many mites make a Considerable Quality so by their contributing their mite toward the General Association against the use of it [tea] they might in some small degree Strengthned the Cause of Liberty... 17

Some towns were still in the process of holding their special Tea meetings when Governor Wentworth reconvened the Assembly on January 11, 1774. During the adjournment
Assembly members Jacob Sheafe and John Sherburne, Portsmouth; Thomas Bell, New Castle; Otis Baker, Dover; Clement March, Greenland; Samuel Brewster, Barrington; John Phillips and John Giddings, Exeter; and Josiah Moulton, Hampton, had been elected to their local Committees of Correspondence. These men provided a vital link between the Assembly and the towns. As legislators they disseminated information, instructed townsmen, and shaped public opinion. As members of local committees, they presented to the Assembly the concerns and reactions of their constituents.

The provincial Committee of Correspondence resumed its functions when the House was brought back into session. On February 5, Speaker Wentworth appointed Simeon Alcott, Jacob Sheafe, and John Sherburne to a committee to answer the letters he had received from Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Maryland. The answers all pledged New Hampshire's support for the common cause and noted particularly that New Hampshire had appointed a Committee of Correspondence the year before. Governor Wentworth's reaction to continued inter-colonial correspondence was to recess the Assembly. In March, abiding by the provisions set down in the Triennial Act, he dissolved it.

When Governor Wentworth dissolved the Assembly, the first Committee of Correspondence ceased to exist. Its importance, however, should not be underrated. The
provincial committee's mere existence created a climate which fostered the free discussion of imperial issues. During its brief life, it spawned at least eleven local committees of correspondence. They continued to exist after the Assembly was dissolved. Together the provincial and the local committees nurtured the idea of cooperation and collective action as a remedy for injustices. The legacy of the first Committee of Correspondence was a more politicized New Hampshire.

New Hampshire residents demonstrated their political awakening in the controversies surrounding the 1774 Assembly election. The cry of "no taxation without representation" became rooted in the minds of disenfranchised citizens. Eight towns--Concord, Dunstable (Nashua), Hanover, Hopkinton, Nottingham, Orford, Pembroke, and Plymouth--petitioned Governor Wentworth for representation in the upcoming Assembly. In December, New Ipswich joined the petitioners and "called upon . . . adjacent towns to adopt the like measures." Their arguments reflected those used against the Tea Act.19

At the height of the Tea debates, the New Hampshire Gazette published a long article titled "Taxation Without Representation Is Subversive of our Constitutional Liberty." "Publicus," the anonymous author, noted that many towns in New Hampshire were taxed, but denied the right of representation in the Assembly. "Is not this . . . acting counter to our express Declarations, and the
solemn Resolves of every assembly on the Continent in our present grand Controversy with the Parliament of Great-Britain?" he asked. "There is no drawing a line of Representation, Every Freeholder in the most distant Part of the Province has an equal Right thereto, with those of the Metropolis. . . ." "Publicus" concluded with a plea for annual elections, and public galleries in the assembly room of the State House so that "... every Individual who inclines, may hear the Debates, and see for themselves, who are the Friends of the People."20

The arguments equating taxation with representation were not new. They were the same ones used earlier against the Stamp Act. However, some people and their elected representatives were utilizing these arguments in a new way. Certainly the publication of the Tea Resolves, accompanied by the names of notable town and colony officials, caused residents to consider seriously the validity of the arguments.

In one town meeting, for example, Dunstable voters agreed that if the Governor would not grant them representation, they should be excused from paying taxes, because without representation in the Assembly, the town could never make its wishes known to the Governor. Unfortunately, Governor Wentworth never learned how the town felt. Jonathan Lovewell, the author of Dunstable's petition for representation, did not mention a threatened tax revolt. Nottingham, the town used as an example by
"Publicus," succinctly summarized his whole argument in its petition for representation. The 350 families had been "Constantly Taxed"... and "... always freely and cheerfully Paid... tho they have Never Enjoy'd the Inestimable Darling Privilege and Liberty of Being Represented in the House of Commons here..." They pleaded with the Governor to consider whether their "... Lives Liberties and Property... ought to be taken from them without their Consent to the Law..." They prayed for a representative so that they "... may no longer be Virtually But Really Represented By a Person of their own Electing..." Governor Wentworth ignored the petitions and issued no new election writs.21

The Governor expected some new faces in the 1774 Assembly. He had appointed John Sherburne to the Council, leaving a vacancy in Portsmouth. There was no incumbent in Stratham--Andrew Wiggin died. When the Assembly met, it contained nine new representatives, plus two representatives with previous experience, but who had not served in the last Assembly.22

Voters in Stratham chose Stephen Boardman, a member of their local Committee of Correspondence. In Portsmouth Jacob Sheafe was re-elected; he was joined by Samuel Cutts and Woodbury Langdon. With Langdon’s election, the factionalism of Portsmouth town politics was carried to the provincial level. Sheafe and Cutts were members of the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence. Langdon had
dissented from the Portsmouth Tea Resolves and he continued to import tea and other British goods in spite of non-importation agreements. With Langdon's election, Governor Wentworth gained a powerful supporter in the House.23

Voters in Exeter, Charlestown, and Winchester turned out men who by 1776 would be considered Loyalists or neutrals. They chose instead Nathaniel Folsom, a merchant and business partner of Councilor Peter Gilman; Samuel Hunt, a military man who had fought at Crown Point and who would later fight at Bennington and Saratoga; and Samuel Ashley, a farmer and future councilor.24

The remaining changes in the Assembly were the result of normal town electoral practices. Some towns routinely rotated delegates. Kensington's Ezekiel Worthen was an example of this practice. He served in the Assembly in 1762, 1768, and 1774, skipping the 1765, 1771, and 1775 sessions.25

The controversy surrounding the 1774 election became Assembly business when the return of four successful candidates was challenged. There had been election challenges in the past, but this time it appeared that the selectman had conspired to keep some groups from casting their votes, perhaps feeling that more liberal men would be elected. In Londonderry, there was a dispute over who was qualified to call the election meeting. A large group of voters boycotted the election and protested the
results. In Chester, the selectmen held the election without posting the warrant in Raymond and Candia. The three towns were classed together for the selection of one representative. Barrington's election meeting moderator declared his son the winner before all eligible men had an opportunity to vote. The Assembly reviewed the situation surrounding the election of Stephen Holland, John Webster, and Joshua Foss, Jr. and ordered the towns to hold new elections. The towns did so and all three men were returned.26

The 1774 Assembly also considered a petition from some voters from the classed towns of Plaistow, Atkinson, and Hampstead who were dissatisfied with the results of their election. Atkinson's Dr. Nathaniel Peabody had mounted a campaign to unseat Jonathan Carleton. In the final days before the election, one of Peabody's supporters analyzed his chances and urged Peabody to ensure his success by giving the voters "something to Drink so they Go up. . . ." Peabody, who would later represent New Hampshire in the Continental Congress, lost the election by seven votes. The Assembly denied the petition for a new election.27

When the membership in the Assembly stabilized, it consisted of thirty-four delegates, eight of whom served on their towns' committees of correspondence. They were Caleb Hodgdon of Dover, Josiah Moulton of Hampton, Stephen Boardman of Stratham, Henry Prescott of New Castle,
Clement March of Greenland, John Gidding of Exeter, and Jacob Sheafe and Samuel Cutts of Portsmouth.

In addition to having a large number of new delegates, the 1774 Assembly was different from previous Assemblies in two other ways, both indicative of the unsettled political climate. For the first time since 1765 a majority of the delegates did not receive any committee assignments. Eight men or 24 percent of the group controlled 75 percent of all the committee business of the House.  

The 1774 Assembly was also unique in that delegates from Durham, Portsmouth, and Stratham carried with them written instructions. This too would subsequently become more common. Portsmouth had provided written instructions to its representatives before, but it was rare for other towns to do so. Portsmouth’s and Stratham’s instructions survived. While Portsmouth’s were more detailed, both mirrored the arguments against the Tea Act as well as the positions taken by “Publicus.” Despite the wishes of the towns, the Assembly approved committees to discuss only two of the items listed in the instructions—public galleries and a Committee of Correspondence. Samuel Cutts and Woodbury Langdon from Portsmouth, Christopher Toppan from Hampton, Nathaniel Folsom from Exeter, and Samuel Jennes from Rye were appointed to investigate the feasibility of building the galleries. Stratham’s neophyte legislator Stephen Boardman did not win a place
on the committee, even though Stratham's voters were particularly interested in galleries.29

On May 28, 1774, the Assembly voted to establish a second Committee of Correspondence. The committee was charged to "... correspond as occasion may require with the Comtees that are or may be appointed by the several Houses of Representatives in our sister Colonies. . . ." Speaker John Wentworth appointed the committee. It consisted of himself, Samuel Cutts, John Gidding, Clement March, Josiah Bartlett, Henry Prescott, and John Pickering. The House further "Resolved and voted that the Speaker of this House be directed to answer such letters from time to time as he may receive from any of the Houses of our sister Colonies Relative to the aforesd difficulties. . . ." By this statement the House authorized the Committee of Correspondence to meet and make decisions outside the confines of regularly scheduled Assembly sessions. Had this measure been taken in May 1773, the first Committee of Correspondence would have continued to function when the Assembly recessed.30

The creation of the Committee of Correspondence was a victory for the group that supported cooperation and collective action against British policies it deemed offensive. The debate took place as representatives were evaluating the possible effects of the recent Boston Port Act. Jacob Sheafe and Samuel Cutts, as members of the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence, had already been
in communication with the Boston committee. The Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence had promised "... we will exert ourselves to carry any plan into effect which may be concerted by the Colonies for the general relief." The Friday before the debate, the New Hampshire Gazette printed the complete text of the Port Act. The representatives realized that the British government would retaliate for acts of violence. They understood the risks involved in collective action considered unsuitable and illegal by representatives of the crown.31

Woodbury Langdon, the Portsmouth merchant who had opposed resistance to the Townshend Acts and the Tea Act, led the fight in the Assembly against creating the Committee of Correspondence. A motion was made on Friday, May 27, to create the committee. It carried by two votes. Saturday morning the issue was brought up again, and this time passed by a single vote.32

Only after it had created the Committee of Correspondence did the Assembly pass the Supply Bill. As soon as Governor Wentworth received his annual salary, he recessed the Assembly until May 30. When the representatives convened on the 30th, they were told that the Assembly was recessed again. They received the same message when they met on June 3 and 5. On June 8 Governor Wentworth dissolved the Assembly saying

I look upon the measures entered upon by the House ... to be inconsistent with his Majesty's service
and the good of this Government, it is my Duty . . . to prevent any Detriment that might arise from such Proceedings. . . . 

Governor Wentworth dissolved the Assembly before the Committee of Correspondence could take any action. However, the Governor heard that there were two letters in Portsmouth addressed to Speaker Wentworth containing plans for the first Continental Congress. The Governor was convinced that by dissolving the Assembly he would prevent New Hampshire from participating in the proposed Congress. With no Assembly, Somersworth's John Wentworth became a private citizen with no authority to act on the request. The Governor also felt that within a few weeks "those persons . . . [who] contrive undesirable measures . . ." would come to their senses.

Historians have emphasized the patriotic nature of the 1774 Assembly. However, if the delegates represented their towns' views when they cast their vote on the Committee of Correspondence, one could easily conclude that New Hampshire was divided almost equally on what actions to take in response to the imperial crisis. The representatives' choice was made more difficult because Governor Wentworth was still personally popular and respected. Even former Speaker Wentworth privately feared that the colony would accept the policies advocated by Woodbury Langdon. Three days after the Assembly was dissolved, Wentworth wrote to the Massachusetts Bay
Committee of Correspondence asking to continue to receive "... notices on the present critical situation of America (whether I am or am not a member of the next assembly)...".

The second Committee of Correspondence, like the first, consisted of men who were well placed and connected. They were significant leaders within their towns and belonged to the leading families of the colony. While firmly convinced that Parliament’s actions were wrong, they were temperate men. By treating members of both Committees of Correspondence as if they were not to be trusted, Governor Wentworth may have radicalized them. Almost certainly, he alienated them.

The new Committee of Correspondence contained one first-term assemblyman—Samuel Cutts. Cutts, whose grandfather had been a councilor, was married to Anne Holyoke, daughter of the president of Harvard College. His family had been prominent merchants in the colony since the mid-1650’s. As a merchant involved in the West Indies trade, Cutts had vehemently opposed British measures that affected mercantile interests. He had worked closely with Jacob Sheafe in opposition to the Stamp Act, Townshend duties, and the Tea Act. And like Sheafe he supported non-importation agreements.

The other new appointees to the committee were Clement March, Josiah Bartlett, and Henry Prescott. March, from Greenland, was a physician and land...
speculator. He was one of the Masonian proprietors, and as a result owned large tracts of land in many New Hampshire towns. He was first elected to the Assembly in 1745. March had been active on the provincial level during the Stamp Act crisis. He signed for New Hampshire the petition the Stamp Act Congress sent to George III, and he was on the committee to write to the King thanking him for its repeal. He also investigated the claims filed against the colony by George Meserve, the Stamp Tax collector.\textsuperscript{37}

Dr. Josiah Bartlett from Kingston was first elected to the Assembly in 1765. He was born and raised in Amesbury, Massachusetts. Kingston voters frequently elected Bartlett selectman. At the provincial level, he had served on several committees to divide the colony into counties. Bartlett was well known throughout the colonies and in Europe for his use of quinine (Peruvian Bark) and for his theory that cool liquids lowered fevers. Both Bartlett and March held judicial appointments.\textsuperscript{38}

The third new appointment was Henry Prescott, a merchant from New Castle. Prescott's stepmother was Mary Pepperell of the Kittery, Maine, Pepperell family, and he was married to Mary Newmarch, whose father had been a member of the Council under Benning Wentworth. When Newmarch died in 1765, Prescott was elected to all the local offices his father-in-law had held. In February 1774, voters from Rye and New Castle elected Prescott to
fill the unexpired term of their deceased representative, Thomas Bell. Prescott had served only three days when Governor Wentworth recessed the Assembly.39

Governor Wentworth's tiff with the Assembly over creating the Committee of Correspondence did not prevent him from working with former representatives, John Giddings, Samuel Cutts, and Jacob Sheafe, to prevent riots when tea finally arrived in Portsmouth. On June 27, the town learned that merchant Edmund Perry had received twenty-seven chests of tea. What they did not know was that Governor Wentworth had arranged for the tea to be unloaded and stored in the custom house. There would be no tea parties in Portsmouth! The Governor then proceeded to work with a town committee to persuade Perry to ship the tea to a port of his choice. The town paid a special watch to guard Perry's tea until it could be moved. What could have been an explosive situation ended with all segments of society working together to preserve peace and good order in Portsmouth.40

Governor Wentworth's success in working with two members of the second Committee of Correspondence, Pickering and Cutts, did not cause the committee to adopt the Governor's views. The committee continued to act as if it had a mandate to consider requests for collective action from other colonies. Eventually former Speaker John Wentworth received his two letters giving the details of the first Continental Congress scheduled for
September 1, 1774, in Philadelphia. The Committee of Correspondence met on June 21, at Tilton's tavern in Portsmouth, to decide what to do.41

On July 6 a group of former legislators, apparently convened by the Committee of Correspondence, met in the assembly room of the State House to choose New Hampshire's representatives to the Continental Congress. Upon hearing of the meeting Governor Wentworth called together the Council, and the group, along with the sheriff of Rockingham County, entered the assembly room. The Governor in a formal speech accused the Committee of Correspondence of usurping his authority to call an Assembly and declared the meeting illegal. He ordered the delegates to disband or face the consequences—possible arrest.42

The former assemblymen, recognizing the truth in the Governor's statement, moved to a public tavern and continued their extra-legal meeting. They decided to issue an open invitation to all towns to send representatives to a congress in Exeter to select New Hampshire's delegates to the Continental Congress. An open meeting attended on a voluntary basis would avoid the illegalities of the meeting in the assembly room. The Committees of Correspondence could not be accused of convening a session of the Assembly, a right that belonged to the Governor alone.43

The invitations to the open meeting were printed and
dated July 6. Towns were requested to send one or more representatives to a July 21st meeting. In addition each town was assessed a portion of the estimated travel expenses for the two delegates to Philadelphia. The town's assessment, based on its share of the province tax, was handwritten on the printed notice followed by "The utility of which measure is so apparent we doubt not your ready compliance with this proposal."44

Former Speaker John Wentworth signed each invitation and used "Chairman" as his title. He did not, however, indicate what he was chairman of, nor did he mention the Committee of Correspondence. He used as his authority for calling the meeting "... the Members of the late House of Representatives for the Province, now met..." He did not indicate when the meeting was held or how many representatives attended. He did say that "... the Members of the late House of Representatives ... are unanimously of Opinion, that it is expedient and necessary, ... to join said Congress ..."45

Whether the ambiguities in the invitation were deliberate or the result of hasty preparation is not known. Governor Wentworth felt that the call was intentionally vague. According to his reports to Lord Dartmouth only some representatives attended the May 6 meeting in the assembly room. He further reported

The committee appear conscious that their powers (if any they ever had) ceased with the Assembly that
elected them, for they do not date the day of the month, because it succeeded the dissolution; it is certain they had not acted, nor even met together before that.

Regardless of the Committee of Correspondence's intent, the towns that sent delegates to the First Provincial Congress treated the call as a genuine request by a legitimate authority. Throughout the colony towns held special meetings to consider former Speaker Wentworth's request. As Governor Wentworth feared, there was widespread confusion over who was calling the meeting. Only Amherst's selectmen correctly identified the Committee of Correspondence as the source of the invitation. The other election warrants variously listed "John Wentworth, Speaker of the House of Representatives," and "members of the Late House of Representatives." Some even included the phrase "In His Majesty's Name." Several towns posted Chairman John Wentworth's letter in lieu of a standard warrant. Voters in Dover, Hampton, Kensington, New Market, Somersworth and Stratham were forced to judge for themselves who was calling the meeting.

In Amherst, Newington, and Sandown, a few men questioned the legality of the whole procedure. Their objections were duly noted in the records of the meetings. In general, towns voted on whether to attend the meeting, chose representatives, and determined how they were to pay their share of the expenses. Some towns took the money from the town treasury, some diverted funds from designated accounts--like preaching and schooling,
same taxed themselves, and some raised the money by subscription.48

The warrant in Lyndeborough, Hillsborough County, illustrated the feelings of many towns. After explaining the purpose of the meeting, the selectmen added to the warrant "As time is short we would desire everyone that hath money by him would bring it to the meeting with him." Trusting that they were doing the right thing, towns pledged time and money to the cause of collective action.49

On July 21, 1774, eighty-five men met in Exeter. No official records of the proceedings have survived; however, the New Hampshire Gazette published a report of the meeting. Former Speaker John Wentworth chaired the meeting. The first order of business was to decide if New Hampshire should attend the Continental Congress. According to the Gazette, the delegates unanimously voted to participate. Josiah Bartlett and John Pickering were first chosen to represent the colony. When they declined, the delegates elected Nathaniel Folsom and John Sullivan. Sullivan was a lawyer from Durham; he had never been a member of the Assembly. Folsom’s and Sullivan’s instructions were written by Wentworth, Bartlett, Pickering, Meshech Weare, and Christopher Toppan. The delegates also elected John Gidding Treasurer of the group. It was his job to collect the assessments from the
The *New Hampshire Gazette* did not publish the names of the delegates to the First Provincial Congress. The list of representatives has been partially reconstructed; seventy-three men representing forty-two towns have been identified. While it is risky to draw any conclusions from an incomplete delegate list, it appears that voters in Londonderry, Winchester, Keene, Charlestown, Nottingham West and Litchfield decided not to participate. We know that those in Kensington voted not to attend. All of these towns were entitled to representation in the Assembly. The names of all the members of the Committee of Correspondence appear on the list, with the exception of New Castle's Henry Prescott's. However, the town's records are so fragmented, that it is impossible to draw any conclusions from them.51

South Hampton, Plaistow, Hollis, Barrington, and Amherst sent men to the First Provincial Congress who were not their representatives in the 1774 Assembly. The remaining towns included in their delegation their former representatives. If the *Gazette* was accurate when it reported that the vote to participate in the Continental Congress was unanimous, then Portsmouth's Woodbury Langdon and Jacob Sheafe, and Exeter's John Phillips must have cast their vote in the affirmative. While Sheafe and Phillips may have hoped that participating in an inter-colonial meeting similar to the Stamp Act Congress would
produce beneficial results, it is unlikely that Langdon
would have held similar views. Langdon had opposed the
establishment of the second Committee of Correspondence
and he was clearly opposed to non-importation agreements.
Yet, by the time the First Provincial Congress meet, many
New Hampshire residents were discussing the possibility of
a ban on British imports. Two weeks after the meeting,
for example, "Camillus" wrote to the New Hampshire Gazette
"... it is earnestly hoped that the DELEGATES at the
approaching CONGRESS will recommend a total stagnation of
commerce with them [Great Britain], even of those articles
that have been thought necessary." 52

Before adjourning, the delegates unanimously voted to
"recommend to their respective towns" that they consider
some form of aid for the poor of Boston, who were feeling
the effects of the British blockade of their port.
Massachusetts towns began sending food and money to Boston
in June, and the New Hampshire Gazette had been printing
notices of the contributions. "Amicus Patriae," in a
lengthy address entitled "To the Inhabitants of New
Hampshire," argued that Boston deserved help because the
city had a long history of contributing funds to those
suffering from natural disasters and fires. The city had
also helped New Hampshire residents taken prisoner during
the Indian Wars. The article was published in the Gazette
in August. 53

Between September 1774 and March 1775, men in at
least twenty-one towns met to discuss a collection for Boston's poor. Those towns which decided to contribute generally sent money or grain; it was more difficult to send other kinds of food or animals. Some towns took their contribution out of the town treasury; some requested donations. Others voted in a new tax, but made the provision that if a person opposed aiding Boston, he could say so and he would not be taxed. South Hampton voters agreed to a new tax in January to raise £15. In February they reversed their vote. Greenland held a special meeting to discuss the aid in January. A debate broke out between Clement March and John Haven over the propriety of voting on such a measure prior to the annual town meeting. Before a vote could be taken, March offered to pay out of his own resources one tenth of whatever the town authorized. Despite his generous offer, the town voted to delay the decision until March. At the annual meeting, voters rejected the proposed aid.54

In Portsmouth, fifteen men who described themselves as "...being deeply affected with deplorable Situation of the Town of Boston, and desirous to strengthen the Hands and encourage the Hearts of our opprest Brethren there, now suffering in the common Cause of America..." requested the selectmen to call a special meeting to discuss contributions. The meeting began September 12, but with adjournments did not end until October 10. On the 12th a motion was made to contribute something for the
relief of Boston’s poor. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned. On the 19th a motion was made to contribute £200 to Boston. The motion was defeated. A motion was made next to set up a committee to receive voluntary donations. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned to October 10. When the town met again, a motion was made to rescind the vote of September 19 regarding the use of town funds for the aid. It passed and voters eventually authorized £200 for Boston to be raised by assessment. All those who paid only a poll tax were exempted, as were those who specifically requested not to be taxed; only two men asked.

The procedure was not as complicated in other towns. Keene voters rejected the proposal outright; other towns devoted one meeting to the subject. Of the twenty-one towns for which records survive, eighteen contributed. The majority were located in Rockingham County. Towns that discussed aiding Boston debated issues of international concern. Those towns which contributed took part in an inter-colonial cooperative effort. The letter Temple wrote to accompany its forty bushels of rye revealed New Hampshire’s growing awareness of the unity created by collective action.

We are sensible that the same injustice which deprives you of your usual method of support by trade, because some tea was destroyed by somebody in your town, would as readily and on the same principles deprive us in whose country the tea was
destroyed, of the cheerful warmth of the sun and refreshing rain, till the tea was paid for, if this were equally in its power.56

In the summer and early fall of 1774, some New Hampshire towns debated another form of collective action—the acceptance of a non-importation agreement directed against all products emanating from Great Britain, except those considered of vital necessity by the signers of each agreement. The New Hampshire Covenant, the name by which we know the agreement, has been attributed to the provincial Committee of Correspondence, the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence, and the First Provincial Congress. The only record of a non-importation agreement found in the Portsmouth town records is the one against tea alone. However, the Portsmouth Committee of Correspondence could have operated outside of a town meeting. Wilton, in Hillsborough County, posted a warrant to discuss the Covenant on July 9. Therefore, the first Provincial Congress which met on July 21 could not have developed the document. Governor Wentworth attributed the Covenant to the provincial Committee of Correspondence. It is likely that the Covenant was sent to New Hampshire by the Boston Committee of Correspondence. The New Hampshire Covenant is very similar to a non-importation agreement sent by that committee to every Massachusetts town on June 8, 1774. Whoever wrote it, the document was referred to by the towns as the Portsmouth Covenant.57
At the same meeting during which Wilton voters elected a representative to the first Provincial Congress, they elected three men to represent them at a meeting in New Ipswich to discuss the Covenant. It is likely that Mason also sent delegates to the meeting. Both Wilton and Mason signed the Covenant, as did Henniker and Boscawen. All were located in Hillsborough County. In Rockingham County, Concord signed; in Grafton, Hanover; in Cheshire, Jaffrey and Plainfield. New Chester (now Hill), in Grafton County, met to discuss the Covenant, but postponed action. Voters in Keene, Cheshire County, also decided to delay action until "... we hear what measures Said [Continental] Congress has agreed upon for themselves and their constituents."58

For Plainfield, which had not sent a representative to the First Provincial Congress and had probably not received word about sending aid to Boston, discussing the Covenant was the first opportunity residents had to express their views and engage in collective action. In the letter sent to Portsmouth recording the meeting's results, the selectmen of Plainfield wrote

"... we heartily wish Gods blessing on your proceedings in this affair of so great importance——and we thank you for giving us the opportunity of filing up a Subscription paper; and all [the] men in this town that has seen it has set their names to it. Except tew [two or ten]. ..."59
The Covenant’s effective date was August 30, 1774. Committees were established to secure signatures. In Mason, subscribers agreed that if ten petitioned, a meeting would be called to discuss changes in the Covenant. Such a meeting was held in November. At that meeting, "... arms and ammunition also Steal Sowing needles Pins and Awls and Doctors drugs that Cannot Be Purchased in the Country of Equal Value ..." were exempted from the Covenant. In early 1775, the New Hampshire Covenants were replaced by the Continental Association.

The signing of the New Hampshire Covenants raised the level of awareness of another group of towns. The process was similar to that which occurred with the Tea Resolves. A committee of correspondence initiated action. Towns held meetings, voted, and elected committees. Communication networks were created among towns in particular areas, like Hillsborough County, and among all towns and Portsmouth.

In the sixteen months since the creation of the first Committee of Correspondence, New Hampshire citizens had been conditioned to believe that cooperation and collective action were the proper responses to injustices. It is only natural that seacoast residents would use that tactic to respond to the next crisis in imperial relations, the ban on the shipment of military
supplies to the colonies. Since the passage of the Quebec Act in June 1774, many New Hampshire residents lived in fear of Indian attacks. A ban on military supplies could have left the colony defenseless.61

On the afternoon of December 13, 1774, Paul Revere, courier for the Boston Committee of Correspondence, rode into Portsmouth looking for Samuel Cutts. He carried news about the military stores ban and information that British troops were being sent to occupy Castle William and Mary. In the middle of the afternoon on the 14th approximately 400 men from Portsmouth, New Castle, and Rye raided the fort, and took away as much gunpowder as they could carry. The powder was hidden until it could be shipped to nearby towns for safe keeping. Under cover of darkness the next evening, John Sullivan, from Durham, led another attack on the fort. This time several small cannons, some muskets, and more powder were taken. These too were secreted in neighboring towns.62

The attacks on Fort William and Mary were not the beginning of collective action by New Hampshire citizens, but rather the culmination of over a year and a half of joint action against the policies and practices of the British government. The raid, like other activities, was planned by a committee of correspondence. Durham, Kingston, Epping, Poplin, Nottingham, Brentwood, Exeter, and Londonderry cooperated by hiding the stolen goods. Their help was another step in the politicization
process. 63

Only Portsmouth and Exeter had protested against the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties. However, between the creation of the first provincial Committee of Correspondence in May 1773 and the raid on Fort William and Mary in December 1774, over fifty towns participated in some form of collective action against the British government. By the end of 1774 communications networks existed which tied all of these towns to Portsmouth. As Governor Wentworth feared the "... spirit of enthusiasm ... spread." As important as the spirit was the spread of an organization to channel the spirit—Committees of Correspondence. The mechanism for continuing protest was in place. 64
Chapter Notes


3. Speaker John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, February 7, 1773, *NHSP*, 7:315-316. The House minutes for January 29, 1773, do not record who made the report on the difficulties between the colonies and Great Britain or who made the motion to write to Dartmouth.

5. *NHSN*, 7:329, 332. In the some sources Giddings is spelled, Giddings, and Alcott, Alcott.


11. *New Hampshire Gazette*, 1765-1773 passim. Generally advertisements for tea were placed on the last page of the paper.


15. See the New Hampshire Gazette, January 7, 1774, for New Castle; January 14, 1774, for Dover; January 21, 1774, for Greenland; February 4, 1774, for Rochester; February 11, 1774, for Somersworth; February 18, 1774, for Stratham; February 25, 1774, for Barrington; and March 4, 1774 for Hampton. Bell, History of Exeter, pp. 83-84.

16. New Hampshire Gazette, February 4 and March 4, 1774. In Hampton, Captain Jeremiah Marston, Jonathan Marston, Jeremiah Towle, Winthrop Sanborn, Daniel Philbrook, and Simeon Lane dissented to the meeting and to the Tea Resolves. Their names were published in the Gazette.

17. Ibid., February 25, 1774.

18. NHSP, 7:350, 351, 355, 356, 359. While Governor Wentworth deliberately recessed the Assembly, he had to dissolve it. It had been in existence for three years and, by the provisions of the Triennial Act, it was time to call for new elections.


22. Ransom B. True in an M.A. thesis entitled "The New Hampshire Committees of Correspondence, 1773-1774," University of New Hampshire, 1969, analyzed the 1774 Assembly. On page 90, he attempted to classify the members as Patriots, Moderates, and Conservatives. In classifying new members as Patriots, he made two errors. Neither Henry Prescott nor John Waldron were new members. Both served in the previous Assembly as replacements for deceased delegates. While there may have been a number of candidates for the Assembly seat in New Castle and Dover, those contests did not involve Thomas Bell or John Gage. Both were dead. Also deceased was
Andrew Wiggan from Stratham. Therefore, True is incorrect when he classifies him as a member who was not returned. True also lists John Sherburne as a member who was not returned. At the time of the Assembly election, Sherburne had taken his place on the Council. Therefore, he was not eligible for election to the house. See NHSP, 7:359; Notice From Speaker John Wentworth to the Sheriff of Rockingham County ordering an election in New Castle and Rye, January 27, 1774, and the response by Sheriff Parker on the reverse side of the notice, New Castle Town Records, Box labeled New Castle to New Hampton, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire Archives, (hereafter cited as NHA); Franklin C. Thompson, ed., Wiggan Genealogy, (n.p., n.d.), passim.

23. Woodbury Langdon to Frederick Lord North, February 7, 1777, Langdon Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire Historical Society, (hereafter cited as NHHS). William Parker was the Portsmouth representative who was not re-elected. He signed the Association Test in 1776, but tried to remain neutral during the war.

24. The representatives who were not returned were John Phillips, Exeter; Simeon Alcott, Charlestown; and Josiah Willard, Winchester. Phillips remained neutral during the war. In 1774, Governor Wentworth appointed him to the Council, but he apparently never took his seat. Alcott also succeeded in remaining neutral; he did not hold any major town offices during the war, but did serve on committees to review town accounts. In 1784, he was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Cheshire County. Josiah Willard did not sign the Association Test. He held his last town office in 1775 and died in 1786. For biographical information on Willard, see O. Hamilton Hurd, ed., History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, (Philadelphia, 1886), pp. 541-582 passim.

25. NHSP, 6:809 and 7:171, 360. I have been unable to determine what happened to Samuel Bruwster of Barrington. He did not sign the petition dated April 7, 1774, protesting the election of Joshua Foss. A Captain Samuel Brewster did sign a petition to the House, dated March 6, 1776, in favor of appointing John Garland a Justice of the Peace. It is unclear whether Captain
Brewster was also representative Brewster or was his son. See NHSP 11:152-154.

26. NHSP, 7:353, 11:152-153, and 12:455-459; Petition to the House of Representatives, Londonderry, April 12, 1774, Record Group III, Box 3, Folder 6, NHA; Voters of Londonderry and Windham to Samuel Livermore, Samuel Barr, and Stephen Holland, March 1774, and Selectmen of Londonderry to Constable of Londonderry, March 14, 1774, and to the Constable of Windham, March 14, 1774, Londonderry Town Papers, Box BB0121, NHA; Speaker John Wentworth to the Sheriff of Rockingham County, May 13, 1774, and Theophilus Dame to the House of Representatives, May 25, 1774, Barrington Town Papers, Box 872141, NHA. Stephen Holland became a Loyalist and was imprisoned for counterfeiting; Joshua Foss served on the patriot side during the war; John Webster continued to be re-elected. For biographical information on Holland, see Kenneth Scott, "Colonel Stephen Holland of Londonderry," Historical New Hampshire 3 (March 1947):15-27. For Foss, see Guy S. Rix, Genealogy of the Foss Family, (Concord, N.H., 1917), p. 26; for Webster, see Benjamin Chase, History of Old Chester (N.H.) from 1719-1969, (Auburn, N.H., 1969), passim.

27. B. Kimball to Nathaniel Peabody, Nathaniel Peabody Papers, Box 1, Correspondence 1767-1815, NHHS; Petition to the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, Plaistow, May 6, 1774, Record Group III, Box 3, Folder 6, NHA. Voters continued to elect Jonathan Carleton through the Fourth Provincial Congress. In the Fifth Provincial Congress, he was replaced by John Calfe.

28. The high Gini score—.711—indicates the uneven distribution of assignments in the 1774 Assembly. High Gini scores became the normal pattern the more involved New Hampshire became in revolutionary activities. See Chapter I for an explanation of the Gini score.

Only three members of the First Committee of Correspondence were reappointed to the Second Committee of Correspondence. They were John Wentworth, John Giddinge, and John Pickering. John Sherburne was a member of the Council, and William Parker was not re-elected. Jacob Sheafe and Christopher Toppan were members of the 1774 Assembly, but were not reappointed. In 1774, Sheafe's views on the British government's policies were similar to his colleague Samuel Cutts's. Toppan's commitment may have been questioned because his father-in-law was William Parker. Toppan, an orphan, had been raised by his uncle the Reverend Paine Wingate. In 1776, Wingate would refuse to sign the Association Test. In 1775, Toppan refused a military commission.


32. Governor John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, June 8, 1774 and Speaker John Wentworth to the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence, June 11, 1774, NHSP, 7:369, 406; Woodbury Langdon to Frederick Lord North, February 7, 1777, Langdon Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, NHHS. The deciding vote to create the second Committee of Correspondence was not Speaker John Wentworth's. He would have voted only in case of a tie.

33. NHSP, 7:369.

34. Governor John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, June 8, 1774, Ibid., 7:369.

35. Speaker John Wentworth to the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence, June 11, 1774, Ibid., 7:406.

36. For biographical information on Samuel Cutts, see the article on his son Charles in Bell, Bench and Bar, p. 300. Portsmouth Town Records, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 2428-242C, 244A-245A, 246A.

38. Frank C. Mevers, ed., The Papers of Josiah Bartlett, (Hanover, N.H., 1979), xv-xxi; Bell, Bench and Bar, 32-33.

39. William Prescott, The Prescott Memorial, or a Genealogical Memoir of the Prescott Families in America (Boston, 1870), pp. 46, 47, 52; New Castle Town Records 1765-1776 passim, NHSL.


41. Mevers. The Papers of Josiah Bartlett, p. 11.

42. Governor Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 6, 1774, NHSP, 7:410, 411.

43. Governor Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 13, 1774, Ibid., 7:411.

44. Notice to the Parish of Atkinson, July 6, 1774, Record Group III, General Court Records—Provincial Congress, Box 1, NHA.

45. Ibid. See also NHSP, 7:400-401.

46. Governor Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 6, and August 29, 1774, NHSP, 7:410, 411.


48. In Amherst, Joshua Atherton and Zachaeus Cutter dissented; in Newington, Benjamin Adams and Joseph Pattinson; in Rye, Richard Jenness; in Sandown, Benjamin Shaw. See notice To Either of the Constables of the Town of Amherst, n.d., Amherst Town Records, Folder titled Wilkins Papers, Box 872071, NHA; Newington Town Records, vol. 1, pp. 91-92, NHSL; Rye Town Records, vol. 1, pp. 259-260, NHSL; Sandown Town Papers, vol. 1, p. 169, NHSL. See also town records cited in footnote 47 above. Some towns may have voted not to participate in the First Provincial Congress, but voted to pay their share of the expenses to send the delegates to Philadelphia. Bedford's town records do not record a vote to attend the
First Provincial Congress. However, its tax records for 1774 list a "Congress Tax." See Bedford Town Records, vol. 3, pp. 111-114, NMSL.

49. Lyndeborough Town Records, vol. 2, pp. 278-279, NMSL.


52. New Hampshire Gazette, August 5, 1774.

53. NHSP, 7:408; New Hampshire Gazette, August 26, 1774.

55. *Portsmouth Town Records*, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 312A-316B. Quotation from p. 312A. Those who dissented were Daniel Humphry and John Sparhawk. There were dissenters in other towns also: William Pottle, Stephen M—ston, and Jonathan Leavit in Stratham; Stephen Lyiord in New Market.


58. *Wilton Town Records*, vol. 1, p. 168, NHSL; Joseph B. Walker, *The New Hampshire Covenant of 1774* *Granita Monthly*, 35 (October 1903): 188-197; *Henniker Town Records*, vol. 1, pp. 57-58, NHSL; *Plainfield Town Records*, vol. 3, p. 58, NHSL; *Mason Town Records*, vol. 1, p. 223, NHSL; *Keene Town Records*, vol. 0, pp. 81-82, NHSL; *Jaffrey Town Records*, vol. 1, pp. 30-31, NHSL; *Hanover Town Records*, vol. 1, p. 289, NHSL; Charles C. Coffin, *The History of Boscawen and Webster From 1733 to 1878*, (Concord, N.H., 1878), pp. 106-107; *Town Meeting Warrant, July 23, 1774, Hill Town Records, Box 879012, NHA; Concord Covenant, Concord Town Papers, Box 875021 (A), NHA. If other towns discussed the Covenant, records have not been found.

59. *Plainfield Town Records*, vol. 3, p. 58, NHSL.
60. Mason Town Records, vol. 1, p. 240, NHSL.

61. New Hampshire Gazette, December 12, 1774.

62. Governor John Wentworth to General Gage, December 14 and December 16, 1774, NHSP, 7:420, 422.


64. Governor John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 13, 1774, NHSP, 7:411.
CHAPTER III

TOWNS CONSIDER THEIR OPTIONS

Whereas the American Continental Congress have entered into, and recommended to their Constituents in the respective Colonies, a Non-Importation, and Non-Consumption Agreement; the punctual Performance of which, is very important and necessary under the distressing and alarming Situation of these Colonies. It is therefore earnestly recommended to the respective Towns in this Government, immediately to appoint Committees to see that the same Agreement be directly adhered to, and faithfully executed.

By order of the Provincial Committee
John Wentworth, Chairman
Portsmouth, November 30, 1774

John Wentworth's notice, published in the *New Hampshire Gazette*, and followed closely by his call for elections to the Second Provincial Congress, forced New Hampshire towns into a renewed process of decision-making. The period, which lasted approximately nine months, was marred by sporadic acts of violence. Residents were torn between their concerns for their rights as Englishmen and their desire for law and order, between accepting the direction of the Provincial Congresses or trusting the wisdom of the British government. For most of the period, the Provincial Congresses actively courted the support of the towns, while the Governor chose to remain silent. Ironically,
Governor Wentworth's actions ended this period and he made the decision for the towns. By leaving the colony in August 1775, he told the towns that they would have a revolutionary government or none at all.

In the Winter of 1774, men who looked to their Governor for leadership in the continuing crisis with Great Britain were disappointed. Governor Wentworth had not called a new Assembly, nor did he make any public pronouncements regarding the recommendations of the Continental Congress or the call for the Second Provincial Congress. Privately he expressed his feelings to the Earl of Dartmouth.

So great is the present delusion, that most people receive them [the recommendations of the Continental Congress] as matters of obedience, not of considerate examination, whereon they may exercise their own judgment.2

Governor Wentworth was incorrect in his assessment. Throughout the colony men had been trying to understand their rights and had been weighing the consequences of their actions to defend them. In the height of the tea crisis Hinsdale, a Massachusetts border town, adopted a series of resolutions critical of the Tea Resolves being adopted by many other towns. Recognizing that some merchants might be tempted to protest against the Tea Act because they stood to lose financially, Hinsdale voters
contended

... that it is the Indispensable duty of every member of Society having Certain Knowledge what Rights and Privileges appertain to him to Exert himself to Persevere those Rights and Privileges when ever they are in danger of being Wrested from him but until he Knows what Rights and Privileges belong to him he ought not to Interpose in Political Matters but industriously persue the Common and Ordinary Business of his Calling and Endeavour to Cultivate Urbanity and Social Harmony.³

The Hinsdale Resolves were printed in the New Hampshire Gazette and they were followed by other newspaper articles urging caution and restraint. These articles became more frequent after the attack on Castle William and Mary. "Amicus Patriae" worried that King George III would think that New Hampshire residents were disloyal when their main complaint was against Parliament. "Excubitor" cautioned against the excessive use of the symbols of opposition, like liberty poles, fearing that they might alienate the Crown. The "Spectator," in a letter addressed to a "Former Friend," analyzed the American position on taxation and accused the colonies of trying to enslave the mother country.⁴

Newspaper articles advocating restraint were in the minority. Almost every issue of the New Hampshire Gazette contained several notices of private individuals or public officials being openly harassed for supporting British government policies. Most of the incidents occurred outside of New Hampshire. However, by
reprinting them, the Gazette defined for its readers what was considered acceptable behavior in the defense of rights from Massachusetts Bay to the Carolinas.\(^5\)

Within New Hampshire, mobs forced Captain Isaac Jones of Portsmouth and Elisha Marsh of Walpole to sign statements recanting their former position on the sale and use of tea. In Amherst, the shire town of Hillsborough County, 400 to 500 men "visited" Joshua Atherton, a lawyer who was accused of having tried to prevent the election of a delegate to the First Provincial Congress, and did not disband until he treated them all to a drink. Reluctant "visitors," like Matthew Patten, a Justice of the Peace from Bedford, were bullied into visiting Atherton out of fear of being visited themselves. In Kingston eighty Sons of Freedom helped an English peddler from Boston burn his thirty-seven pounds of tea rather than "be carted to Amesbury in a horse cart."\(^6\)

Not even Governor Wentworth was spared from verbal attack. After he secretly helped recruit carpenters from the Wolfeborough area to build barracks for General Gage's troops in Boston, the Portsmouth Ways and Means Committee published an article in the Gazette characterizing the Governor as "cruel and unmanly," "mean and low," and "an Enemy . . . to the Community." The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee was Hunking Wentworth, the Governor's uncle.\(^7\)
In Rochester, the Committee of Correspondence forced Nicholas Austin, Governor Wentworth’s accomplice in the carpenters incident, to kneel before the assembled group and confess his errors. His testimony showed clearly that the Governor intended to deceive. Both Austin’s confession and the record of the meeting were published in the Gazette.  

Voters in three Hillsborough County towns, New Boston, Francestown, and Hollis, were disgusted with such incidents of mob rule, fearing that it could lead to a collapse of law and order in their communities. They voiced their displeasure by formally adopting resolutions in which they promised to support the enforcement of the law by the current civil officers and to bear Testimony against all unlawful Proceedings of unjust and inconsiderate Men, congregating together (as they pretend) to maintain their Liberties and very audaciously trample under Foot they very Law of Liberty itself, and madly destroy that Jewel which is so exceeding precious to our American Land.

The New Boston, Francestown, and Hollis Resolves were almost identical and were adopted between October 21 and November 7, 1774. While there is no evidence of an inter-town meeting, the similarity of the Resolves suggests that they were the result of a circular letter or some other form of inter-town communication. Their nature reflected the area’s strong commitment to an orderly and law abiding society.
At the same time that Hollis was considering its Resolves, all Hillsborough County towns were debating an invitation to attend a county-wide congress, now called the First Hillsborough County Congress, to be held at Amherst on November 8, 1774. The call originated with an Amherst committee composed of Paul Dudley Sargeant, David Campbell, and Benjamin Kendrick. The three were instructed by their town

... to use their utmost efforts to diffuse peace and good order throughout the County, and excite in the minds of people a due respect to all just measures that may be recommended by the present Grand Congress at Philadelphia. . . .10

Hollis voted to send three delegates to the Amherst meeting. Henneker, Lyndeborough, Mason, and New Boston also voted to attend the First Hillsborough County Congress. These towns' instructions to their delegates reveal that regardless of the two-fold purpose of the meeting—peace and good order and the recommendations of the Continental Congress—the towns wanted only to discuss the threat to local authority. Aware that England would retaliate if mobs destroyed public or private property, they feared that a continuation of "unlawful combinations" would "... tempt the authority of Great Britain to wrest from [New Hampshire] that invaluable Blessing we now enjoy which our Sister Province (the Massachusetts Bay) is Deprived of."11

The only known delegate to the first Hillsborough
County Congress with experience at the provincial level was Paul Dudley Sargeant, who had represented Amherst at the First Provincial Congress. He alone may have realized the significance of the recommendations of the Continental Congress. No minutes of the first Hillsborough County Congress have survived. Consequently no town actions can be directly traced to recommendations from the meeting. Perhaps because the towns could not agree on the agenda, nothing was done. The Congress, itself, however, is not insignificant. It set up a county congress system that rivaled Exeter and Portsmouth as a source to which towns could turn for mutual support and direction. At least two more Hillsborough County Congresses met. Cheshire and Grafton Counties patterned meetings in their area on the Hillsborough model.12

While Governor Wentworth probably was encouraged by the conservative tone of the Franconia, New Boston, and Hollis Resolves, he was discouraged by some towns’ responses to the recommendations of the Continental Congress. Before Chairman John Wentworth published his appeal for their acceptance in the New Hampshire Gazette, Durham and Portsmouth held town meetings to implement the Continental Association. They were followed by Exeter, Greenland, Kingston, Newmarket, Epsom, and Hawke. All published the minutes of their town meetings in the Gazette.13

Colony residents were well aware of the proceedings
of the Continental Congress. Since October of 1774 the New Hampshire Gazette had devoted a large portion of each issue to the Congress. It had published the recommendations and all addresses to the King, and to the British, and American people. At the time of the Wentworth letter, it was in the process of publishing the names of all the delegates and the minutes of the meetings at which they were elected.¹⁴

Thirty-four towns adopted the recommendations of the Continental Congress respecting the importing or the using of British goods prior to the meeting of the Second Provincial Congress. All appointed a committee to implement the Continental Association, generally called the Committee of Inspection.¹⁵

Those towns which specified the function of the committee took advantage of the situation with Great Britain to address local problems related to peace and good order. Durham, Somersworth, and Portsmouth expected their Committees of Inspection to "... make it their Especial Care and Endeavour that Every Prevailing vice and Immorality, be Supresd. . . ." They cautioned against "gaming," "billards and cards," "dissipation," "tavern haunting," and "idleness." Kingston, Newmarket, and Epsom voters were more concerned with "Hawkers, Peddlers and Pettychapmen with their Lawns, Cambricks, Ribbons, etc. tempting Women, Girls and Boys with their unnecessary Fineries. . . ." They passed resolutions to
Because of its local orientation, the acceptance of the Continental Association and the establishment of a Committee of Inspection seemed logical and appropriate to men of all political persuasions. It was a non-violent form of inter-colonial collective action, and thus socially acceptable to those who abhorred the mob action inimical to the social order. Moreover, it was a kind of action that had been used successfully against the Stamp and Townshend Acts. While Governor Wentworth regretted the colony's submission to pressure from other colonies, high government officials like Councilor John Sherburne and Representatives Jacob Sheafe and Woodbury Langdon supported the action. They served on Portsmouth town committees to implement the Continental Association.

Those towns that had not adopted the Continental Association before the Second Provincial Congress, tallied the number of towns that had made their decisions and now took similar actions. New Ipswich voters instructed their delegate Deacon Isaac Appleton, "That he make Enquiry whether the Towns in general have accepted the Result of Congress." The answer must have been satisfactory; New Ipswich established its Committee of Correspondence and Inspection in March.

The Committees of Inspection had broad powers. They were to ensure that no goods originating from Britain or
Ireland were to be imported, sold, or consumed in their towns, including any East India Company tea, and all "Molasses, Syrups, . . . Coffee . . . Pimento . . . Wines . . . or Indigo" from British island possessions. They were to make sure that no one from their town engaged in the slave trade or exported sheep to the West Indies.

Committees from one town met with those from another to determine the origin of goods for sale. Under the guise of eliminating vice, committees were authorized to investigate the private and public lives of townsmen. In the coming months, these committees would assume more authority, raising the issue of the abuse of power. Aware of this possibility, the Continental Congress stated that the Committees of Inspection were to "... be chosen ... by those who are qualified to vote for Representatives in the Legislature." This would keep the enormous power of the committees in the hands of the more responsible segments of society, those accustomed to the exercise of authority.

The invitation to attend the Second Provincial Congress forced towns to choose between the Committee of Correspondence and the Governor. In issuing the call, John Wentworth used the title "chairman" and referred to the authority granted to the Provincial Committee. Any misconception towns may have had over who was responsible for the Provincial Congresses should have been clarified
by the wording of the call. Towns now knew that the First Provincial Congress was not endorsed by the entire General Court, the House, Council, and Governor, but was called by the Committee of Correspondence. Towns entered into the discussion and made their decision knowing that their action would alienate their Governor. Yet there is no record of a town that attended the First Provincial Congress refusing to participate in the Second because it felt that it had been deceived by the Committee of Correspondence.21

The purpose of the Second Provincial Congress was to elect delegates to the Second Continental Congress scheduled to meet on May 10, 1775. The Congress would be canceled if Britain repealed the tax on tea, curtailed the powers of the Vice-Admiralty Courts and repealed the Intolerable Acts. New Hampshire residents expected Parliament to act on the colonists’ requests in March.22

John Wentworth presided over the one day meeting, held on January 25, 1775. John Giddinge continued as Treasurer. The representatives elected John Sullivan and John Langdon, Woodbury Langdon’s younger brother, delegates to the Continental Congress. Langdon was a merchant whose only legislative experience was in the First Provincial Congress. He had been actively involved in the protest over the Tea Act, was a member of the Portsmouth Committee of Inspection, and is among those
who have been positively identified as having taken part in the raid on Castle William and Mary. Wentworth, Nathaniel Folsom, Masherch Weare, Josiah Bartlett, Christopher Toppan, Ebenezer Thompson, and William Whipple were authorized to call another Congress if they felt it was necessary. The same men with the addition of Samuel Cutts and John Pickering were designated the provincial Committee of Correspondence.23

Only Pickering and Whipple had not been members of the Assembly dissolved by Governor Wentworth; Pickering had, however, been a member of the first two Committees of Correspondence. Whipple, a Portsmouth merchant, had been captain of a vessel involved briefly in the slave trade. He was Samuel Cutts’s cousin and was married to Catherine Moffat, the daughter of a prominent Portsmouth merchant.24

As the crisis with Great Britain deepened, Whipple joined with leading Portsmouth merchants—John Sherburne, Jacob Sheafe, Samuel Cutts, Hunking Wentworth, and John Langdon—to protect the interests of the local mercantile community. At the time of the Townshend Acts, he had served on a committee to insure that outsiders did not bring merchandise to Portsmouth for sale in violation of local policies. He was a member of the group that arranged for the transfer of Portsmouth’s quota of East India tea to Halifax, thus avoiding violence in the town. He supported aid to Boston and was on the
Committee of Inspection to enforce the Continental Association. 25

Nathaniel Folsom and Meshech Weare were also new to the Committee of Correspondence. Folsom, an Exeter merchant, had been one of New Hampshire's delegates to the First Continental Congress. Weare, a Hampton Falls lawyer, was well known throughout the colony. A Harvard graduate, he was first elected to the Assembly in 1745. He was a Justice of the Peace, and had represented New Hampshire at the Albany Congress. 26

Folsom and Weare may have been added to the Committee of Correspondence so that the group would represent the views of two opposing factions. During the meeting John Sullivan, supported by John Langdon, Nathaniel Folsom, Stephen Boardman, and others, lobbied for a petition to Governor Wentworth asking him to call a new Assembly and to keep it in session no matter what action the delegates might take. Meshech Weare, along with John Hale of Hollis and Paine Wingate of Hampton Falls, opposed the movement. They contended that developing a petition to the Governor would be illegal because the delegates were convened for one purpose only-- the election of delegates to the Continental Congress. Sullivan is reputed to have replied "... that their whole meeting was unlawful, and therefore might do one thing as well as another." Weare and his supporters prevailed on this issue. The petition to Governor
Wentworth never materialized.\(^{27}\)

The Congress did adopt a resolution supporting the recommendations of the Continental Congress. This was followed by a long letter addressed "To the Inhabitants of the Province of New Hampshire," signed by John Wentworth, President, citing as his authority The Convention. The address was published in the New Hampshire Gazette on February 3, 1775.\(^{28}\)

President Wentworth courted the support of the towns by carefully constructing the recommendations in the address to appeal to the widest possible audience. He repeated the essential points of the Continental Congress's recommendations: towns should establish Committees of Correspondence and Inspection, promote home manufacturing, and continue to aid Boston; individuals should avoid the use of East India Company tea, and merchants should not take advantage of a scarcity of imported goods by raising their prices.

Wentworth incorporated into the document the concerns for "peace and good order" expressed by towns attending the first Hillsborough County Congress. He urged citizens to avoid all "disorders of every kind" and to "... yield due obedience to the Magistrates within this Government, and carefully endeavor to support the laws thereof." Also incorporated were the seacoast area towns' recommendations against vice, extravagance, hawkers, peddlers, and petty-chapmen.\(^{29}\)
For those concerned with the security of the colony, the Congress recommended that current militia officers comply with existing military training laws, for "... the Militia upon this Continent, if properly disciplined, would be able to do great service in its defense, should it ever be invaded by His Majesty's enemies." Men were urged to "... acquaint... [themselves] with the manual exercise, ... the motions being natural, easy, and best calculated to qualify persons for real action."\(^{30}\)

In addressing the towns' concerns for peace and good order, prices, defense, and itinerant merchants, the Second Provincial Congress now assumed a major function of government. It became an organization to which the towns could look for guidance, counsel, and authority. Delegates like New Ipswich's Isaac Appleton returned home not only with answers to specific questions, but also with a sense that their towns had contributed to the development of the document. Deacon Appleton had been instructed to "... use his endeavour that the Province be put in a State of Defense and that the Deputies when met at Exeter do recommend such Manual Exercise as they shall think proper."\(^{31}\)

After reading the address "To the Inhabitants of the Province of New Hampshire" in the newspaper, Governor Wentworth was certainly aware that the Provincial Congress had exceeded its stated purpose. A group of 144 men duly elected by their towns had assumed the right to
make recommendations for the entire colony and cleverly made Governor Wentworth responsible for their actions. In the address "To the Inhabitants," President John Wentworth reminded New Hampshire citizens that because the Governor had dissolved the Assembly "... for near ten months past you have been deprived of any share in your own Government, and of those advantages which flow to society from Legislative Assemblies. ..."32

Mindful that if he was to maintain control over the colony he would have to exert his authority quickly, Governor Wentworth issued election writs for a new Assembly. Elections were held in February for an Assembly scheduled to meet May 4, 1775. The time spread between election and meeting was a deviation from past practice. Generally elections were held a month before a new Assembly convened. Governor Wentworth may have hoped that the election of representatives would be an outward sign of his control over the colony. If his supporters were elected, they could act as a mediating force within the towns. Furthermore, with delegates elected and ready to meet, the Governor could not be accused of denying the blessings of government to his people.

The promise of a General Assembly did not help Hillsborough County towns grappling with problems in their communities which were exacerbated by the conditions in nearby Massachusetts Bay. The recommendations of the Continental Congress and the New
Hampshire Provincial Congress provided guidelines, but they lacked interpretations and the means for enforcement.

To seek solutions for county problems, Benjamin Kendrick and David Campbell, using the authority delegated to them by the town of Amherst, called the Second Hillsborough County Congress. The purpose of the April 5, 1775, meeting was to determine what measures should be taken by the county towards Massachusetts Bay "in case the cloud should break on that Province first," what relationship people within the county ought to have with each other, and what recommendations ought to be given to the county's lawyers regarding court cases involving people from New Hampshire and Massachusetts Bay.

The towns' instructions to their delegates and the minutes of the meeting exemplified the frustrations of the towns as they attempted to preserve law and order, solve regional problems, and defend their rights. Hollis voters felt that if the county opened negotiations with Massachusetts Bay, it might weaken the authority of the provincial Committee of Correspondence. They also felt that the recommendations made by the Second Provincial Congress regarding peace and harmony "... to be as good a Method as any we can Prescribe." Wilton's voters agreed that there was a problem in the county with "Supressing Riots or Mobs." Their delegates were
instructed to lobby for a petition to Governor Wentworth "Enquiring after the Bonds of Some Officers of the County." Wilton expected local officials, especially those appointed by the Governor, to preserve the peace.\textsuperscript{34}

Representatives of seventeen towns attended the Congress. The first day of the meeting, the group voted to accept the recommendations of the Continental Congress. Dr. Jonathan Grove of New Boston and Esquire Quigley of Francestown objected. Grove's dissent was not considered serious enough to keep him off a seven-man committee to prepare resolutions for the group to consider. The resolutions restated the Continental Congress's charges against "Routs, Riots, or licentious attacks upon the person or property of any person," and called for "military training once a week at least." It was well known that the Durham militia, under John Sullivan, had been training weekly since March. The increased military training prompted a debate in the \textit{New Hampshire Gazette} between Sullivan and "Monitor," who claimed that Sullivan was violating the law by conducting military training more than four times a year. The Hillsborough Congress, however, chose to follow Sullivan's example.\textsuperscript{35}

Deacon Stephen Jewett from Hollis, Daniel Kendal from Litchfield, and Grove were appointed a committee to meet with local lawyers requesting that they refrain from suits against New Hampshire residents in the Massachusetts Bay court system until the courts operated...
on a freer bases. The committee reported that the lawyers agreed to the congress's recommendations.\textsuperscript{36}

The delegates selected Captain John Stark (Derryfield), Paul Dudley Sargeant, and David Campbell to write a letter to the people of Massachusetts Bay outlining the difficulties that residents of Hillsborough County were having in collecting debts owed to them by Bay Province residents and asking that Massachusetts citizens take that into consideration when they attempted to collect money owed to them. The Remonstrance was to be published in the \textit{Essex Gazette} and a Boston newspaper. The same committee was instructed to prepare two petitions to the New Hampshire General Court--one dealing with credit, the other requesting two sessions of the Superior Court at Amherst instead of one.\textsuperscript{37}

It is unlikely that the Remonstrance or the petitions were written. Shortly after the meeting the "cloud burst" over Massachusetts Bay with the battles at Lexington and Concord. A shocked David Campbell and Jonathan Martin prefaced the call for the Third Hillsborough County Congress with ". . . God forbid! Let every Breast swell with Disdain at the Impious thought. The British troops have invaded every sacred Right of Nature."\textsuperscript{38}

The purpose of the Third Congress was to discuss appointing a Committee of Correspondence to communicate with Boston, to adopt measures to provide for the
security of the county and to enforce the Continental Association. Again Hollis voters were concerned that creating a county Committee of Correspondence might undercut the provincial committee. In a town meeting they "Voted unanimously that as we have a Provincial congress now sitting which will doubtless send to them—therefore it appears to us not best for this county to take it upon them to send such a committee." The Hollis view would prevail.39

When the county Congress met again on May 24, the members re-affirmed their pledge to enforce the recommendations of the Continental Congress and the two towns which had not selected a Committee of Safety promised to do so. The main agenda item was the creation of a county Committee of Safety. The fifteen man committee was "to act on any affairs that come before them . . . til further orders."40

The Hillsborough County Congresses typified the decision making process all towns went through in deciding what position to take relative to the Continental Congress, the Provincial Congresses, and local problems. Throughout the colony towns met in groups to discuss areas of common concern. This resulted in demi-centers of authority in Amherst, Keene, Plainfield, Lebanon, Walpole, and Haverhill. At times these centers challenged both Portsmouth and Exeter for control of parts of the colony.
New Hampshire reacted swiftly to the news of the bloodshed at Lexington and Concord. Local histories are full of stories of exhausted couriers speeding through towns on horseback spreading the word; of farmers dropping their plows, running for their guns and horses, and rushing to Massachusetts Bay; of women up all night packing lunches and other provisions; of tearful goodbyes and foreboding thoughts.41

The provincial Committee of Correspondence received the news on April 20, during its meeting in Durham. It dispatched Alexander Scammell, John Sullivan's law clerk, to Boston to gather the latest intelligence. In a terse note John Wentworth, Chairman of the Provincial Committee of Correspondence, issued a call for the Third Provincial Congress to be held the next day to determine "measures necessary for our safety."42

In light of the emergency, many selectmen dispensed with the usual warrant, spread the word as best they could, and convened the meeting to select delegates. On April 21, representatives of thirty-four towns met in Exeter. They voted on two items only. Nathaniel Folsom was placed in charge of all New Hampshire men going into Massachusetts Bay and Josiah Bartlett and Theophilus Gilman (Exeter) were sent to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress to determine how many men New Hampshire should raise. When Scammell returned with the news that the colony was not in danger of being attacked, the Congress
adjourned to the 25th.\footnote{43}

Representatives of thirty-five additional towns joined the Congress at its next meeting. This was the largest group of representatives convened to date. The Congress included a few men who had marched with their town’s unit to Lexington and Concord and many more whose sons had responded to the alarm. Despite having had first-hand information on the situation in Massachusetts Bay, not one of those men was appointed to any committee.\footnote{44}

Only two first-time delegates, Wyseman Claggett and Matthew Thornton, received any assignments. While they were new to the Provincial Congress movement, they were well known in the Portsmouth community and to Governor Wentworth. Claggett, who was educated at the Inns of Court in London, had practiced law in Portsmouth until he moved to Litchfield. Between 1767 and 1769, he had been the King’s Attorney General. Thornton, a physician from Londonderry, had previous legislative experience. At the time the colony was divided into counties, Governor Wentworth had appointed him Chief Justice for the Court of Common Pleas for Hillsborough County.\footnote{45}

The Congress concerned itself only with military matters. It requested towns to store foodstuff—"Biscuit flower and pork"—and to raise units of Minute Men. It formed a committee to purchase arms and ammunition to sell to towns needing them, and it selected Nathaniel
Folsom, John Giddinge, and Josiah Bartlett to correspond with Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and other colonies to secure information on the raising of troops.\textsuperscript{46}

The most controversial item on the agenda was Massachusetts Bay's request that the New England colonies raise a 30,000 man army of observation. The Third Provincial Congress voted that while it would not discourage men who wished to join Massachusetts units, it could not promise to raise an army because not all New Hampshire towns were represented at the Congress.\textsuperscript{47}

The delegates returned their homes in early May. Some would be returning to Exeter on May 17 for the Fourth Provincial Congress, which had been scheduled before the battles at Lexington and Concord necessitated calling the Third Provincial Congress. Some men were scheduled to travel to Portsmouth to attend the General Assembly. People in some areas of the colony feared that Governor Wentworth would postpone the Assembly, but it met as scheduled on May 4 and had a quorum on May 5. The representatives unanimously elected John Wentworth Speaker and his election was approved by the Governor.\textsuperscript{48}

In his opening address, Governor Wentworth appealed to the Assembly as "the only constitutional and legal Representatives of the People" and pledged that "... you may entirely rely on my most ardent zeal to co-operate with you in whatever constitutional measures may
be found to accomplish... a Restoration of our Harmony with Great Britain."49

Governor Wentworth had high hopes for a very cooperative Assembly. He had formulated a two-part plan which, if successful, would remove those in opposition to him from the Assembly, and add new members who would support his views. The first part of the plan called for the arrest of all representatives who had taken part in the raid on Castle William and Mary. Because Governor Wentworth knew that the militia and the population would protest and perhaps prevent the seizure of the representatives, he arranged for the arrests to be made by British troops sent to Portsmouth from Boston. The plan had the full support of both the King and his agent Lord Dartmouth. They encouraged Wentworth to consider sending the accused men to England to insure that they would receive a fair trial. The first part of Governor Wentworth’s plan failed when General Gage refused to send troops to Portsmouth. Nathaniel Folsom, Josiah Bartlett, and Henry Prescott took their assembly seats unmolested. John Langdon and John Sullivan were attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, and were out of reach of the Governor.50

We don’t know whether Folsom, Bartlett, Prescott, Sullivan and Langdon suspected that they might be arrested. However, Folsom and Bartlett probably resented the Governor when they took their seats and were not
prone to cooperate with him. As part of his plan to punish those who had taken part in the raid on the fort, Governor Wentworth stripped participants of their appointive offices. Both Folsom and Bartlett were removed as Justices of the Peace for Rockingham County, which resulted in a loss of this source of income. Bartlett also lost a militia appointment.51

When the Assembly met the Governor believed that the second part of his plan, packing the Assembly with delegates favorable to him, had a chance of success. During the election process Wentworth issued writs to three Grafton County towns—Lyme, Orford, and Plymouth. No Grafton County towns had been represented in previous Assemblies, though both Orford and Plymouth had petitioned for representation in the 1774 Assembly.52

Shortly after Plymouth held its election, the town published its instructions to its delegate, John Fenton, in the New Hampshire Gazette. The instructions were similar in tone to the New Boston, Franconia, and Hollis Resolves, although they did contain a recommendation for public galleries in the assembly room. More significantly, they alerted towns to the fact that Governor Wentworth issued writs to new towns without consulting the Assembly.53

When the General Court met, a group of Portsmouth voters sent a petition to the Assembly protesting Governor Wentworth's actions. Signed by fifty-nine
residents, the petition declared

... as there is no Legal Authority vested in any separate Branch or Branches of the Legislature of the government to issue such writs, we apprehend the exercise of such authority ... not only unwarranted by the British Constitution & the Laws of this Province, but in its consequences subversive of both, and pregnant with many alarming evils.54

The Assembly, which had just created a committee to answer the Governor's opening message, created a second committee to address the issue of the three new towns.

Undoubtedly Governor Wentworth issued writs to Lyme, Orford, and Plymouth suspecting that they would elect delegates who would support his recommendations. However, his action reopened a controversy that transcended political factionalism. Not since 1748 had a New Hampshire governor unilaterally issued election writs to previously unrepresented towns, and that time the House had refused to admit the new members.55

The composition of the committee to examine the admission of the three new towns reflected the seriousness of this issue and its importance to the whole House. Two of the Governor's strongest supporters—Jacob Sheafe and Woodbury Langdon—were members. They were joined by John Gidding, Josiah Moulton, Jr. (Hampton), and Caleb Hodgdon (Dover). In the report they presented to the Assembly, they argued that

... it is a settled Rule (as we apprehend) that every House of Assembly has a Right to regulate
itself, and their indispensable duty to prevent any encroachments being made on their Privileges, and as the Governor sending Writs without the concurrence of the other Branches of the Legislature to Towns that had not been allowed to send members appears to us a manifest breach thereof and directly contrary to the Spirit, and design of the English Constitution.

[Ebenezer] Greene of Lyme and Israel Morey of Orford prudently chose not to travel to Portsmouth to claim their Assembly seats. John Fenton, a former British army officer, lived in Portsmouth and wanted to be seated. By Spring 1775, Fenton was anathema in several areas of the colony. Shortly after the battle at Lexington and Concord, Fenton wrote a letter to the people of Grafton County, urging them not to abandon their farms, but to continue to produce food "to supply the wants of your fellow men down country." He concluded with "I am informed that should the People from the Back Settlements take up arms—a number of Indians and Canadians will fall upon them. . . ." Fenton's reference to a possible Canadian attack needlessly terrorized Grafton County residents who had feared such an event since the passage of the Quebec Act.

In its meeting, the Fourth Provincial Congress also discussed the admission of the three new towns to the General Assembly. The Congress argued that establishing such a precedent may leave room for some Designing Governor to occasion a very partial Representation of the People by sending to small
The Congress recommended that the Assembly refuse to seat the representatives. When the General Assembly heard the report they had commissioned and the recommendation of the Fourth Provincial Congress, the representatives voted "clearly" not to seat the delegates from the new towns. With that vote, the second part of Governor Wentworth's plan failed.58

Lacking the presumed help of Greene, Morey, and Fenton, Governor Wentworth placed before the House Lord North's Conciliatory Proposal, accompanied by a strong recommendation for its acceptance. The North Proposal provided for tax relief for any colony which would tax itself for its share of the defense of the continent and would provide for the permanent salaries of government officials. This was a divide and conquer tactic. No longer would there be one imperial policy for all colonies, but individual policies for particular colonies. The House was expecting the North Proposal and already knew its contents. The New Hampshire Gazette had printed an article on the proposal in its April 21, 1775, issue.59

The Reverend Paine Wingate, one of Hampton Falls' delegates to the Second and Fourth Provincial Congresses, developed a proposal to implement the North Plan. The Wingate proposal was based on the fear that
Should we entirely disregard the motion it might very probably answer North's end he wished for. He might then say he made an offer and we would neither accept of that or make another. 61

He recommended that the colonies offer "... to contribute their full proportion of the national expenses attending to their common defense." In addition, Wingate proposed that a formula be developed which would calculate revenue Britain received from each colony as a result of the acts of Trade and Navigation. This sum would be factored in when determining a colony's share of the common defense. 62

Wingate felt his proposal was a way to buy time. If General Gage could be persuaded not to attack while the British government was discussing the proposal, tempers would have a chance to cool. What he hoped was that ultimately the British people would recognize the reasonableness of the American position and pressure the North ministry for a change in policy. 63

Wingate sent a copy of his proposal to his brother-in-law Colonel Timothy Pickering of Salem, Massachusetts, who was a member of the Massachusetts Bay Council of War. Wingate planned to present his "healing plan" to the Fourth Provincial Congress and hoped that the proposal would be presented to the New Hampshire and Massachusetts General Assemblies. How much support there was in New Hampshire for an attempted reconciliation with Great Britain after Lexington and Concord is unknown.
However, John Sullivan and John Langdon must have thought that there was a possibility of a proposal for they wrote to the provincial Committee of Correspondence:

... we Earnestly Entreat you to prevent our General Court from making any application to Great Britain for Redress of Grievances as that would Draw the Resentment of all America upon our Province it being agreed that no one shall make terms without the advice & Consent of the whole.

It is possible that because of the continuing debate over Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme, the General Assembly never discussed Lord North's Proposal or any other proposals. Governor Wentworth refused to accept the House's decision on the three towns and urged them to rescind their vote. The request prompted an exchange of letters between the House and the Governor focusing on constitutional issues, and was carried to the public in the pages of the New Hampshire Gazette. Neither side in the conflict would change its position.

On June 13, 1775, a highly irritated John Fenton appeared before the House, demanded his seat, and spoke in favor of Lord North's proposal. News of Fenton's conduct in the assembly room quickly spread throughout Portsmouth. The same evening a crowd gathered and decided that Fenton should be taken to Exeter to defend his actions before the provincial Committee of Safety. The mob found Fenton at Governor Wentworth's home where he had been a dinner guest. When the crowd threatened violence to get Fenton out of the house, he surrendered.
and was forced to walk to Exeter where he was put in jail. Terrified, Governor and Mrs. Wentworth grabbed their five month-old son, Charles-Mary, and fled to Castle William and Mary, three miles away from their home by water.66

By leaving Portsmouth, Governor Wentworth essentially abdicated. His concern for his family’s safety was understandable; however, Governor Wentworth may have been too hasty in assuming that he was in personal danger. The crowd that came to the Governor’s house wanted John Fenton, and they left when they got him. While Fenton was humiliated, he was not physically harmed. Throughout the entire war, there is no record of any high former New Hampshire royal official being placed in actual physical danger. A few, like Treasurer George Jaffrey, were forced temporarily to relocate, but most stayed in their own homes and politically faded. Had he stayed in Portsmouth, Governor Wentworth probably would have suffered the same fate.

By choosing to leave Portsmouth when he did, Wentworth told town officials, the Portsmouth Committee of Ways and Means, and county officials that he did not trust their ability to protect him and his family. His views did not necessarily reflect the views of Portsmouth officials. Members of various groups, regardless of political beliefs, had previously demonstrated their ability to work with each other and with the Governor to
preserve the peace in Portsmouth.

At the very time that the Assembly and the Governor were locked in conflict over the admission of the three new towns, legislators, councilors, merchants, town officials, and the Committee of Ways and Means worked with the Governor to prevent possible riots when the British ships guarding Castle William and Mary began confiscating food intended for sale in Portsmouth. Under orders from Admiral Graves and General Gage, the British diverted the food to Boston for use by the army and navy. To prevent townspeople from retaliating by attacking his ships from the castle, Captain Barclay, Commander of the British ship Scarborough, ordered his men to destroy the breastwork at the fort.67

The Assembly was not in session when Barclay began seizing foodstuffs. That did not stop Portsmouth merchants who had ordered the food from appealing directly to the Governor for help. Governor Wentworth called together the Council and it agreed with the merchants that Barclay’s actions might result in riots once the people became aware of a possible food shortage. Governor Wentworth did not succeed in convincing Barclay to ignore the orders of his superiors and release the food. However, the Portsmouth Committee of Ways and Means was able to use the Governor’s efforts to defuse a mob of about 400 men from the countryside who swarmed into Portsmouth to protest the British actions.68
Earlier, Portsmouth residents had demonstrated their particular affection for the Governor and their determination to protect him from harm. Only a few days after Lexington and Concord voters unanimously resolved that the Inhabitants of this Town will use our Utmost Endeavours to prevent any Insult from being offered to his Person or Dignity and that we will take Every Method in Our power to assist and Support him in the due and Legal Exercise of his Authority.69

Residents of New Castle continued to seek Governor Wentworth's aid even as he languished in self-imposed exile at Castle William and Mary. On the evening of August 12, 1775, Captain Barclay's men attacked the town's night watch, wounding one man and capturing another. Not knowing what else to do, the selectmen, John Swispoon and Henry Prescott, wrote to Governor Wentworth:

... the man who is taken on Board has a Wife and six small Children, and in very poor Circumstances, his wife now great with Child. Therefore we beg your Excellency's interpositions in behalf of the poor man who is on Board... .

Wentworth arranged a meeting on August 14, and the man was released.70

While in exile at Fort William and Mary, Governor Wentworth continued to communicate with the Assembly through Theodore Atkinson, the seventy-eight-year-old Secretary of the Colony. On July 15, 1775, Wentworth, citing the House's refusal to seat the three new members,
recessed the Assembly. It was never to meet again. 71

Meanwhile, the Scarborough continued to confiscate foodstuffs coming into Portsmouth and tried to prevent local fishermen from augmenting the area's food supply. Seacoast residents retaliated by refusing to sell Barclay any fresh meat; by mid-August, Barclay considered returning to Boston for supplies. On August 17, Governor Wentworth wrote to the selectmen of New Castle asking them if the town could provision the group at the castle—a bout twenty adults. Swispoon and Prescott responded, telling the Governor that the town could not provide him with food, as residents were already being forced to travel by land to Portsmouth to get what meager supplies they could. There was just not enough food to spare. When the Scarborough returned to Boston for supplies on August 23, 1775, the Wentworths were aboard. Royal government in New Hampshire came to an end. 72

By leaving the colony, Governor Wentworth made an important decision for New Hampshire towns. They would have a revolutionary government. His flight thrust the Fourth Provincial Congress into a period of crisis. It had developed a plan to finance and fight a war, but it lacked a plan to govern the colony. A reluctant Congress now had to find a way to maintain peace and good order throughout the province.
Chapter Notes

1. New Hampshire Gazette, December 2, 1774


4. New Hampshire Gazette, June 17, 1774, February 24, 1775, and March 17, 1775.

5. Ibid., December, 1773 to August, 1775, passim.


8. Ibid., November 11, 1774.


10. Amherst Town Records, vol. 1, pp. 241-242, NHS; Although incomplete, the best description of the Hillsborough County Congresses is Edward D. Boylston, Historical Sketch of the Hillsborough County Congresses Held at Amherst (N.H.), 1774 & 1775 with Other Revolutionary Records (Amherst, N.H., 1884).
11. Hollis Town Records, vol. 4, p. 247, NHSL; Henneker Town Records, vol. 1, p. 63, NHSL; Lyndeborough Town Records, vol. 2, pp. 235-236, NHSL; Mason Town Records, vol. 1, p. 236, NHSL; New Boston Town Records, vol. 1, p. 53 (source of quotation), NHSL. Historians have considered the Hollis' Resolves its instructions to its delegates to the Hillsborough County Congress. It is more likely that attending the Congress and adopting the Resolves were two separate items that just happened to be discussed at the same town meeting. See Samuel T. Worchester, History of the Town of Hollis, New Hampshire, From Its First Settlement to the Year 1879 (Nashua, N.H., 1879), pp. 140-141; Samuel T. Worchester, "Hollis, New Hampshire, in the War of the Revolution," New England Historical and Genealogical Record 30 (July 1876):289. Worchester in both his book and article misleads his readers by stating that the four separate resolves which compose the Hollis Resolves were "of . . . like tenor" of the first, the only one he prints. They were not. The first resolve has a definite patriotic ring, while the other three are very conservative.

12. Delegates to the First Hillsborough County Congress were Paul Dudley Sargeant, David Campbell, Benjamin Kendrick for Amherst; James Bowman for Henneker; Stephen Jewet, Stephen Ames, Reuben Dow for Hollis; David Badger for Lyndeborough; Abadiah Parker, Joseph Barrett for Mason; and Jonathan Gove (Grove), George Christy for New Boston. See town records cited in footnotes 10 and 11 above. Other towns which had men versed in the major issues of the day elected other delegates or chose not to participate. Hollis, Lyndeborough, Temple, Wilton, Mason, Dunstable, Hopkinton, and Merrimack sent delegates to the First Provincial Congress.

13. Governor John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth, December 2, 1774, NHSP, 419; see the New Hampshire Gazette, December 2, 1774, for Durham; December 16, 1774, for Portsmouth; January 6, 1775, for Exeter; January 13, 1775, for Greenland and Kingston; January 20, 1775, for New Market and Epsom; and January 27, 1775, for Hawke (Danville).


17. See Portsmouth Town Records, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 317A-320B. Hunking Wentworth signed the petition requesting a town meeting to vote on the Continental Association and Councilor John Sherburne served on the committee to draft the resolutions. Hunking Wentworth, Woodbury Langdon, and Jacob Sheafe were members of the Committee of Inspection. Other men active in politics on the provincial level who were involved in implementing the Continental Association in Portsmouth were John Pickering, Samuel Cutts, John Langdon, Supply Clapp, and Samuel Hale. Langdon, Clapp, and Hale had been part of the Portsmouth delegation to the First Provincial Congress.


20. Ibid., 7:428.


23. Ibid., February 3, 1775 and NHSP, 7:442-444. See Chairman John Wentworth to the Selectmen of Wolfeborough, n.d., for reference to John Giddings as Treasurer of the Second Provincial Congress, Wolfeborough Town Records, vol. 1, p. 53, NHSL. No records have survived for the Second Provincial Congress. The New Hampshire Gazette reported that 144 men attended. The account did not include the names of the representatives, but the delegate list has been partially reconstructed. See Appendix B for a list of known delegates. One hundred thirty-three men representing sixty towns have been identified.


27. Charles E. L. Wingate, *Life and Letters of Paine Wingate, one of the Fathers of the Nation*, 2 vols., (Medford, Mass., 1930), 1:152-153. Charles Wingate incorrectly attributed the letter describing the debate between Meshech Weare and John Sullivan to Speaker John Wentworth in an attempt to prove that his ancestor and Wentworth had the same political philosophy. Avery Butters in an unpublished dissertation titled "New Hampshire History and the Public Career of Meshech Weare, 1713 to 1786" repeated the error on page 122. The letter was actually written by Governor John Wentworth to Thomas W. Waldran. See "Belknap Papers," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 6th Series 4 (1891): 73-74. Internal criticism should have indicated to Wingate and Butters that they were in error. The writer of the letter says "I hear the proceedings at Exeter are very warm. . . . ." Somersworth’s John Wentworth would hardly have described a meeting he chaired in those words.


29. Ibid., 7:443.

30. Ibid., 7:444.

32. NHSP, 7:443.


34. Ibid., p. 15; NHSP, 7:443; Hollis Town Records, vol. 4, p. 268 (source of first quotation), NHSL; Wilton Town Records, vol. 1, p. 107 (source of second quotation), NHSL.

35. Boylston, *The Hillsborough County Congresses*, pp. 15-17; see also NHSP, 7:448; New Hampshire Gazette, March 10, 17, and 31, 1775.

36. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

37. Ibid., pp. 16-17; see also NHSP, 7:448.

38. Ibid., pp. 18-19 (source of quotation).


44. The Gini Score for the Third Provincial Congress was .306 indicating a high concentration of assignments in the hands of a few individuals. Eight men ranked as leaders: five from Rockingham County, two from Strafford, and one from Hillsborough. No one from Grafton or Cheshire Counties received any assignments. Only fourteen men or
13 percent of the Congress received assignments. Of those who did, nine had been members of the Assembly dissolved by Governor Wentworth the preceding year, five were or had been members of the provincial Committees of Correspondence, and eleven had been members of previous Provincial Congresses.


46. NHSP, 7:462 (source of quotation), 466.

47. Ibid. 7:456.


49. NHSP, 7:372.


52. NHSP, 9:685-686, 687 and 7:374; Orford Town Records, vol. 1, p. 217, NHSL.

53. New Hampshire Gazette, February 24, 1775.
54. NHSP, 9:714-715.


56. NHSP, 7:378.

57. John Fenton To the People of the County of Grafton, from a real friend, who sincerely wishes their well-being, Ibid., 7:480. Fenton was a close personal friend of Governor Wentworth's and was married to Elizabeth Temple, the sister of New Hampshire's Lieutenant-Governor, John Temple. The early Lyme town records burned in a fire. The first name for Representative Greene comes from the Lyme tax records for 1773-1775. See NHSP, 12:503 and Secretary of State-Inventories, Record Group IV, Box 20, Folder 5.

58. Ibid., 7:507.

59. Ibid., 7:378.

60. Ibid., 7:380-381; New Hampshire Gazette, April 21, 1775.


62. Ibid., 1:160-161.

63. Ibid.


65. NHSP, 7:384, 385; New Hampshire Gazette, July 2 and August 8, 1775.

66. Mevers, Josiah Bartlett, pp. 14-15; Governor John Wentworth to General Gage, June 15, 1775, NHSP, 7:381;


70. *New Castle Town Records*, Microfilm Reel Number 985185, NHSL.

71. *NHSP*, 7:393-394. The Gini Score for Governor Wentworth's last assembly was .753 indicating that the majority of the assignments were held by very few men. The Assembly leaders were John Wentworth, Ebenezer Thompson, John Giddings, and Woodbury Langdon. All but Langdon would play an important role in New Hampshire's transition from colony to state.

72. *New Castle Town Records*, Microfilm Reel Number 985185, NHSL.
CHAPTER IV

CONGRESS ACCEPTS RELUCTANTLY THE BURDENS OF GOVERNMENT

In July 1775, Meshech Weare wrote to the Continental Congress and reported:

The Colony is at Present wholly governed by this Congress & the Committees of the respective Towns, But we greatly desire some other Regulations as our present situation is attended with many Difficultys . . . . 1

Weare's and similar statements have suggested to some historians that the Fourth Provincial Congress was a revolutionary body whose goal was to wrest control of the government from royal officials. They attempt to strengthen their argument by noting that the Fourth Provincial Congress was the largest representative body ever convened in the colony. They tend to equate numbers with a revolutionary movement and assume that there were no differences of opinion among the delegates.

On the surface, the evidence seems to support their interpretation. The Fourth Provincial Congress developed a plan for conducting the war and adopted a plan for future representation. It became the colony’s de facto government after the departure of Governor Wentworth. And, most significantly, it opened discussions with the
Continental Congress on assuming civil government. Historians who cite these actions as evidence that the Fourth Provincial Congress was a revolutionary organization all have analyzed the Congress as a unit. They look at the results of the Fourth Provincial Congress and assume that those results were its intention at the beginning of its session.

A closer attention to the passage of time, however, suggests a different interpretation, one that details the painstaking process the Fourth Provincial Congress followed before requesting permission from the Continental Congress to become a government. When the first and second sessions of the Fourth Provincial Congress met, Governor Wentworth was still in the colony and he convened sessions of the Assembly. The Congress's third and fourth sessions met when Governor Wentworth was in Boston. If the two periods are analyzed separately, it is clear that as long as Governor Wentworth was in the colony, the Congress reacted primarily to events rather than creating them.

With the Governor's departure in August 1775, the Congress initiated some actions, but still relied upon the Continental Congress for authority to implement them. The Fourth Provincial Congress did not seek power. It pleaded with the Continental Congress to adopt "a general plan" for all colonies, so it would not have to make an separate plan for New Hampshire. It
refused to make decisions until forced to do so by exigencies. After making decisions, it appealed to the Continental Congress to legitimize its actions.  

Chairman John Wentworth called the Fourth Provincial Congress before the battles at Lexington and Concord. Unlike the other Congresses, this Congress, which began on May 17, 1735, was elected to meet as necessary for six months. The General Assembly was also in session in May. For the Fourth Provincial Congress to meet as planned, the Assembly had to petition Governor Wentworth for a recess.  

Governor John Wentworth reluctantly agreed, knowing that he was giving those Assembly representatives who were elected to the Provincial Congress an opportunity to attend that extra-legal meeting. However, the Governor had no choice. He could not afford to alienate the Assembly if he wanted a favorable decision on the admission of Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme.  

When the Fourth Provincial Congress met, the delegates elected Matthew Thornton president, Ebenezer Thompson clerk, and Nicholas Gilman (Exeter) treasurer. To provide order and structure to their proceedings, the Congress modeled itself after the General Assembly. The group chose one of its own members, the Reverend Josiah Stearns from Epping, to lead them in prayer. It also created a committee to develop rules of conduct for the members. Each new General Assembly had always taken
similar actions.4

Chairman Wentworth's call does not make clear exactly what measures the provincial Committee of Correspondence intended the Fourth Provincial Congress to discuss. When the Congress met, however, its primary purpose became providing for the defense of the colony. Defensive measures assumed increasing importance when the Congress learned that Governor John Wentworth had asked General Gage to station two regiments of soldiers at Portsmouth, raising the specter of a possible Lexington and Concord in New Hampshire.5

The colony was not prepared for war. It had little ammunition and no army. To begin to provide for defense, the Congress dispatched Colonel John Hale (Hollis) on an unsuccessful mission to Albany to purchase arms and ammunition. The Congress then considered Massachusetts Say's request to the Third Provincial Congress for the New England colonies to create an army of observation. Not knowing where General Gage would strike next, the Congress voted to raise three regiments totaling 2,000 men, providing for more to be called up later as needed.6

The vote to create the army passed unanimously. The Congress and New Hampshire residents viewed calling up troops as a necessity, as neither felt that professional soldiers should be killing American farmers. Even men like Paine Wingate, who advocated reconciliation with Great Britain, recognized that the colonists would defend
themselves.  

The urgency of the matter superseded even the strong habitual tendency of the New Hampshire Congresses to look for leadership elsewhere. This became plain in the apologetic report from the Congress to John Sullivan and John Langdon at Philadelphia:

We would have desired to have consulted [the] general Congress, if time had allowed, before we had taken such an important step as raising a military force; but the case seemed too plain to be doubted, and too urgent to be delayed.

While there was no dissent over raising an army, financing one created a serious problem. The colony had very little cash. The Fourth Provincial Congress had some money, but it had been collected to pay the expenses of the colony's delegates to the Continental Congress. The Congress estimated that it would immediately need an additional £3000 to pay the army through December. If troops were needed past that time, other arrangements would have to be made.

To pay the army through December, the Congress voted to raise £300 by a voluntary assessment on each town according to its proportion of the colony's tax bill, the same method that had been used to finance New Hampshire's delegates to the Continental Congress. The system proved wholly inadequate. On May 23, a list was prepared of the sixty-eight towns that had ignored the assessment for the Second Provincial Congress. Had they paid, the Congress
Perhaps it was this accounting which prompted Matthew Thornton's appeal to the Continental Congress for advice on how to pay the army and his suggestion that the Continental Congress consider some form of paper money. "We desire to have the benefit of some general plan for bills of credit, or that we may be pointed to such other methods as shall appear just and equal, . . ." he wrote. The Congress repeated Thornton's appeal to John Langdon and John Sullivan, adding

"We must, Gentlemen, press you on this article. The little cash we ever had is almost entirely drained off. . . . we seem to have no method left but borrowing, and we don't know that we can borrow, unless we issue a proper currency ourselves, or have a currency on a general plan . . .".

Neither the Continental Congress nor Sullivan and Langdon responded to the letters. Having failed to receive any advice from Philadelphia, the Congress was forced to develop its own plans to raise money. The Congress directed those towns that had not paid their provincial taxes to pay them to Receiver General Nicholas Gilman, (the treasurer of the Congress), instead of to George Jaffrey, treasurer of the colony.

Residents of Temple, in Hillsborough County, voted to pay their taxes as usual, but they significantly removed the phrase "in his MAJESTY'S name" from the warrants. Nottingham, in Rockingham County, decided not to pay its taxes to Jaffrey, but worried about the
possible consequences of its action. It established a committee

... to be ready in Case a Law Suit arise or any Person should be arrested or Have any of their Goods or Chattels Taken from them on account of the Province Rate not being Paid to the Province Treasurer.\(^{13}\)

Since it was impossible to determine how much money might be obtained from unpaid town taxes, the Congress created a committee consisting of Ichabod Rollings from Somersworth, Josiah Bartlett, Ebenezer Thompson, Joseph Cilley from Nottingham, Joseph Welch from Plaistow, David Gilman from Pembrook, and Stephen Evans from Dover to ask Treasurer George Jaffrey to give the Congress the money in the colony treasury. Even though the committee impressed upon Jaffrey "... that the Exigence of the colony is such that no excuse or delay of the same can be admitted...," they were unsuccessful. Jaffrey remained in control of the funds.\(^{14}\)

Failing to receive any money from Jaffrey, the Congress copied a measure that had been adopted recently in Massachusetts. They created £10,050 worth of treasury notes, redeemable at 6 percent interest, beginning in December 1776. Funds from the colony treasury were to be used to redeem the notes. This was a bold plan. It meant that the Congress had to persuade the General Court that its debt was the colony’s debt.\(^{15}\)

Before ending its first session, the Congress created two new standing committees, both consistent with
its goal of providing for the defense of the colony. The Committee of Supplies was responsible for furnishing the troops with all necessities and also with distributing ammunition to towns that needed it. The Committee of Safety was responsible for executing

... whatever plans have been determin'd upon by the Congress, to be immediately carried into Execution, which have not been entrusted to the management of any particular Persons or Committee. ...

Essentially the Committee of Safety was a new name for the provincial Committee of Correspondence. When first appointed, the committee consisted of Matthew Thornton, Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Nathaniel Folsom, and Ebenezer Thompson; all but Thornton were members of the Committee of Correspondence. Disgruntled delegates carped that the committee was drawn from only two counties, Rockingham and Strafford. The Congress voted to add three additional men who would represent Grafton, Hillsborough, and Cheshire counties; the new members were Israel Morey (Grafton), the Reverend Samuel Webster (Hillsborough), and Samuel Ashley (Cheshire). Josiah Moulton and later Meshech Weare, both from Rockingham County were also added.

The second session of the Fourth Provincial Congress convened on June 27, 1775, only ten days after Bunker Hill. A somber group analyzed the relationship of the Congress to the General Assembly. The stalemate between the Assembly and the Governor over the admission of the
three new towns also affected the Congress. In its brief session, held while the Congress was recessed, the Assembly discussed only Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme. They failed to legitimize the measures passed during the Fourth Provincial Congress’s first session—calling up troops, collecting taxes, creating bills of credit—by voting upon those measures themselves. Without the legitimizing action of the Assembly, the Congress would be forced to assume the authority to honor the commitments that it had made.

In spite of the escalating violence that decreased the possibility of a reconciliation with Great Britain, Governor Wentworth chose not to back down on the admission of the new towns. He did not reconvene the General Assembly. Although nominally in charge, he remained in self-imposed exile at Castle William and Mary. The Governor seemed to be unaware of the concerns of his people. He communicated only with Secretary Theodore Atkinson who scurried around Portsmouth delivering his messages to members of the Council. Perhaps because he felt he was unable to control events in the colony, the Governor chose to ignore them. While New Hampshire residents mourned the dead and tended to the wounded from Bunker Hill, the Governor wrote letters complaining about his “miserable house” at the fort and the money he was spending to improve it.18

In this time of crisis, the Governor chose to remain
silent, closing his ears to the cries of his people. He shrank from his responsibilities as governor of the colony. Men in the Assembly who supported Woodbury Langdon and those in the Provincial Congress who supported Paine Wingate’s reconciliation efforts were leaderless.

If the Fourth Provincial Congress intended to declare itself the governing body of the colony, its second session would have been a good time to do so. The agonies of Bunker Hill were fresh in the representatives’ minds. Now the conflict between the colonies and the mother country was affecting New Hampshire in a personal way. It was creating widows and orphans and maiming young men. Over 1,000 New Hampshire soldiers fought in the battle. There were 108 casualties: 41 killed, 67 wounded. Most of the casualties were from Hillsborough County, Hollis alone had seventeen. Representative John McClary’s brother and Representative Enoch Noyce’s son-in-law were among the dead.19

Still the Fourth Provincial Congress did not take advantage of the subsequent hostility towards Great Britain. The delegates realized that Governor Wentworth had lost his ability to lead, but they continued to respect the fact that he was their governor, and did not flaunt their position. The Congress passed only those measures which it considered essential for the operation of the colony, becoming steadily more insistent in its
pleas for direction from the Continental Congress. As in their first session, it acted when it failed to receive advice.

Again the Congress's main priority was the colony's security. Residents in Grafton and Cheshire counties feared a Canadian attack and appealed to the Fourth Provincial Congress for help. They considered themselves especially vulnerable after the Continental Congress dismantled Fort Ticonderoga to prevent the artillery there from falling into the hands of General Carleton. In early June Matthew Thornton wrote to the Continental Congress asking them to review their decision on the fort. He informed the Continental Congress that the colony's new settlements on the Connecticut River "... are very defenseless in every respect and under Terrible apprehensions from the acts of warlike Preparations made in Canada."20

The fear of a Canadian attack was not the hysterical reaction of a few frontier communities, but was taken seriously by the New England Provincial Congresses. The Fourth Provincial Congress voted to participate in an inter-colony intelligence network with the Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut Provincial Congresses. Designed to share information about British and Indian movements, the network was based on information provided by individuals and towns.21

The Continental Congress did not consider Matthew
Thornton's request for troops at Fort Ticonderoga, nor did they write to him suggesting any alternatives for defense. Feeling that it had no other choice, the Provincial Congress voted to raise three companies for the defense of the Upper Cohos and ordered them to work with local inhabitants to build necessary garrisons, beginning at Northumberland.22

Again there was the problem of paying the troops.

We have wrote to you and the Congress several times on the situation of our affairs but not receiving any directions . . . have ordered Ten Thousand Pounds more [in notes] to be . . . Emitted for supplying the present Exigencies of the Colony . . . .23

William Whipple chided Langdon and Sullivan as he explained the necessity of issuing additional bills of credit to pay the Upper Cohos army. Needing cash, not bills of credit, to purchase ammunition from other colonies, the Congress again asked Treasurer George Jaffrey to turn over the colony's funds. Perhaps Jaffrey sympathized with the proposed use of the money; he gave Nicholas Gilman £1511-2-8. Still loyal to Governor Wentworth, however, Jaffrey refused to allow Gilman to inspect the colony's account books. Gilman did not know how much more money was available.24

The Fourth Provincial Congress was concerned also about the security of the colony's other exposed region--
the seacoast. Residents worried about a possible naval attack and feared that their towns would be destroyed, like Charlestown, Massachusetts had been. Because fire was one of the consequences of a naval attack, the Congress decided to move the colony’s records out of the private homes of public officials in Portsmouth to a more secure location.

It appointed Samuel Brooks and Noah Emery from Exeter and John McClary from Epsom to "look out a place or places in Exeter" for the records. When they reported that they had found men willing to house the records, the Congress appointed a new committee consisting of Brooks, Stephen Evans, William Weeks of Greenland, Samuel Dudley of Brentwood and Thomas Bartlett of Nottingham to move the documents.25

The committee requested records from Theodore Atkinson, Secretary of the colony; George King, Clerk of the Superior Court; Joseph Peirce, Register of Deeds; William Parker, Register of the Court of Probate; and Isaac Rindge, Clerk of the Inferior Court and Quarter Sessions. Atkinson and Peirce refused initially to surrender their records. Both feared that Governor Wentworth would continue to hold them personally responsible for the safety of the documents.26

The removal of records from a colony’s provincial capital to a revolutionary capital is cited by many historians as evidence to support the view that the
American Revolution was a democratic revolution. They claim the movement was symbolic of the transfer of power from an elite colonial government to a democratic revolutionary government.

To apply that interpretation to New Hampshire is a misreading of the situation. Throughout the war, Exeter was safer than Portsmouth. The Fourth Provincial Congress’s sole concern was the security of the records. Their removal was not intended as a political statement. The Congress invited the affected public officials to accompany the records to Exeter, and to keep them in their charge until further notice. To guard against a misinterpretation, Congress declared

... as the real Intent of the vote may be mistaken, or not understood, It is Now resolved that it was the sole Intent & meaning of this Congress in removing the aforesaid Records, that they might be kept in a place of more security than they apprhapsed Portsmouth to be, and not to fix them from being removed again to Portsmouth whenever the Present Difficulty Danger may subside.\(^{27}\)

At the conclusion of the Congress’s second session, President Pro Tempore Meshech Weare prefaced his report to the Continental Congress with "... we think it our duty to give you the earliest account of our transactions, that thereby you may be enabled to direct our future conduct."\(^{28}\)

The third session of the Fourth Provincial Congress met on August 22, 1775. The following day Governor
Wentworth left Castle William and Mary and sailed to Boston. He never returned to mainland New Hampshire. Governor Wentworth's departure, which could not have been anticipated when the Fourth Provincial Congress began meeting in May, catapulted the Congress into a new role. With no governor to call an Assembly, the Congress became the only popularly elected colony-wide body. It became solely responsible for the conduct and financing of the war, and for maintaining peace and good order in the province.

If the goal of the Fourth Provincial Congress was to assume the powers of government, this would have been a prime time for the Congress to proclaim itself the sole governing body of the colony. It did not do so. Instead the Congress examined its structure and function to determine its proper role in society. A new election was scheduled for November. If changes were desired, it would be best to make them before the elections.

The Fourth Provincial Congress had modeled itself after the General Assembly. Its internal operating procedure was the same, except that delegates served without a fixed rate of pay and there was no uniform plan for elections. Representatives to the General Court had always received a stipend and expenses for each day they attended. The amount was established by law and paid out of the province treasury. Delegates to the Provincial Congresses had been paid by their towns at a rate their
towns could afford, which in some cases was nothing at all. Some of the poorer towns, instead of sending an unpaid delegate, simply decided to go unrepresented. The question of uniform pay for delegates to the Congress was a divisive issue. Some men found the proposal, an outward sign of the Congress's new position, too radical to accept. After heated debate, the congressman voted that they should be paid for their services. The measure had passed on the first vote, but was brought up for a second vote and passed again. Delegates would receive five shillings per day from their towns, plus two pence per mile for travel from the Congress for attendance at the Fourth Provincial Congress only. Pay was not retroactive to the first three Congresses.

The Congress next began work on a uniform plan of representation for future congresses. This became the main agenda item for its third and fourth sessions. The plan was not tied to any movement for the assumption of government in New Hampshire, but was simply an attempt to regularize the election process. There appeared to be general agreement on the need for such a plan. Perhaps the Congress found a large group of unpredictable numbers unwieldy. In the First through the Fourth Provincial Congresses, towns were allowed to send any number of delegates they wanted. By the Fourth Provincial Congress, a few towns combined to select one
representative. Most towns sent between one and three delegates, with Portsmouth sending five. Perhaps the Congress felt that a town's representation based upon its ability to pay for the expenses of delegates was not a fair system. The wealthier towns would always be able to send more representatives than poorer towns.

Work on the plan for representation began on August 30, 1775, and was completed on November 14. The resulting plan was clearly a compromise between those who favored one representative for each town and no property qualifications for delegates, and those who supported proportional representation and high property qualifications for delegates. The compromise plan favored the latter group. The plan was not submitted to the towns for approval. Had it been, many of the difficulties that surfaced in the Fifth Provincial Congress might have been averted.

The delegates were so divided on the subject of representation that three committees were created to develop the new plan. The first committee consisted of William Whipple, John Dudley (Raymond), Nicholas Gilman, Ebenezer Thompson, Steven Evans, Samuel Hobart, Wyseman Claggett, Benjamin Giles (Newport, Croydon), and Jonathan Childs. Ninety per cent of the committeemen came from towns which had been enfranchised by the Crown. One third of the committee had been members of the General Assembly; only Giles had never participated in a New
Hampshire assembly election.  

The committee had or knew of several plans of representation which it could use as models for its plan. The most important was the "Act for Ascertaining What Places May Send Representatives to the General Assembly," passed by the New Hampshire Assembly in 1754 and disallowed by the King in 1757. It also knew the election qualifications for both the General Assemblies and the Provincial Congresses. Three committeemen, Hobart, Giles and Childs, could have had experience with the voting practices of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

From the disallowed act, the committee adopted the idea that each town containing 100 freeholders would be entitled to one representative; smaller towns would be classed together and each group would elect one representative. Those towns that had been allowed to send more than one representative would continue to do so, even if they did not have 200 freeholders. Towns containing 200 or more freeholders would be allowed two representatives, with Portsmouth continuing to send three.

The committee was aware that it had been elected by men qualified to vote in town affairs, i.e., a freeholder or those with a taxable estate of £20. Fifty-nine percent of the delegates to the Fourth Provincial Congress had no experience with any other type of election. Their towns had not been entitled to
representation under the Crown. The committee knew that it would alienate representatives from many towns if it proposed high property qualifications for voting. It suggested that all resident freeholders be allowed to vote. Non-residents could vote if they had real estate in the town valued at £20.\textsuperscript{34}

Members of the committee realized that there was strong sentiment within the Congress and the colony for keeping a substantial property qualification for office holders. Deferring to those who felt that £300 was too high, they suggested a £200 qualification for representatives. Finally they proposed a method of dividing the pay for representatives from classed towns.\textsuperscript{35}

The committee plan was much fairer than the method used by the Crown. However, it was still biased in favor of the older, more populated areas of the colony. It also assumed that there was a direct correlation between holding property and the ability to govern. While that assumption was generally unchallenged during the colonial period, there was considerable dispute as to the appropriate amount of property. The committee presented their plan on August 31, only a day after it had been created. The Congress voted "That it Lay for consideration." Two days later Congress recessed.\textsuperscript{36}

On November 4, the whole Congress discussed the proposed plan for representation. The plan was attacked
by those who felt it was too liberal and those who felt it was too restrictive. The attacks reflected the deep division in the Congress between those from the older, more wealthy and populated sections of the colony—the seacoast, plus a few towns in Hillsborough County—versus the newer, less well settled areas of the colony.

Ebenezer Thompson recorded in the Congress's minutes the votes that took place during the discussion. The records are not very clear, but it appears that members as a group developed a more conservative plan for representation. It included a £20 freehold property qualification for voting and a £300 property qualification for office holding. Each town with 100 freeholders would be allowed one representative, with smaller towns combining to elect one delegate from each town group. More populated towns would be allowed to send one additional representative for each additional 100 freeholders. If this plan became the new plan of representation, the older, more populated areas of the colony would dominate the Congress. For example, Portsmouth would have five or more delegates.37

It was clear from the differences between the committee plan and the plan from the floor that no plan would satisfy everyone. Representatives from towns entitled to representation under the Crown wanted to maintain their traditional dominance in the legislature. They favored proportional representation and high
property qualifications for office holding and voting. Representatives from towns new to the legislative process argued that each town should have its own representative and insisted that property qualifications for voting and office holding be low to maximize the number of men who could participate. On November 9, only five days after the whole Congress discussed the new plan, the Congress voted, that all the Votes of Saturday last, respecting Delegates or Representatives, and the qualifications of the Electors and elected, and the manner of choosing and sending them, be, and hereby are reconsidered, and made void.

Matthew Thornton reappointed Whipple, Dudley, Thompson, Claggett, and Giles to the second committee to develop a plan of representation based upon the plan from the floor and the committee's report. They were joined by Meshech Weare, Timothy Walker (Concord), Caleb Page (Dumbarton), Richard Downing (Newington), Samuel Ashley, Israel Morey, Ebenezer Smith (Meredith), James Knowles (Rochester), Jonathan Martin, and Abel Webster (Campton.) The committee contained five men from Rockingham County, three each from Strafford and Hillsborough Counties, and two each from Cheshire and Grafton Counties. Forty percent of the committee members had represented their towns in Governor Wentworth's last General Assembly. Sixty percent of the committee men were from towns entitled to representation in the General Court. This committee could not reach an agreement.
dissolved without presenting a proposal to the congress.39

Matthew Thornton placed himself on the third committee to develop a plan of representation. He reappointed Whipple, Dudley, Thompson, Hobart, Giles, walker, Morey, Smith, Knowles, and added Nathaniel Folson, John Cragin (Temple), Nathaniel Prentice (Alstead), and David Gilman (Pembroke.) This committee contained six men from Rockingham County, three from Strafford, two each from Hillsborough and Cheshire Counties, and one from Grafton County. Twenty-one percent of this group served in Wentworth's last Assembly; 50 percent represented towns entitled to representation under the Crown.40

The third committee reached an agreement. It presented a proposal very similar to the first plan which had been rejected. This time the proposal was accepted. The plan stipulated that representatives must have real estate valued at £200, but "every Legal Inhabitant Paying Taxes" could be a voter. Each town containing 100 taxpayers was allowed one representative; Portsmouth was allowed three and Exeter. Londonderry, Amherst, Dover, and Chester two each. Towns with less than 100 taxpayers were to combined in districts to elect one representative each. The formula developed by the first committee for paying delegates from classed towns was adopted.41
The delegates agreed that the new plan for representation would be used in the elections for the Fifth Provincial Congress. Using the results of a recent census, but not a map, the committee grouped together those towns that had to combine to elect one representative each. The committee’s lack of knowledge about the geography of the colony would pose problems for some classed towns in the election for the Fifth Provincial Congress.

The Fourth Provincial Congress was also concerned with its function. When Governor Wentworth was in New Hampshire, the Congress’s primary duty was to provide for the defense of the colony. And that was done. A mechanism was in place to raise an army, but financing one remained a thorny problem. Defense and finances continued to be a priority for the Congress after Wentworth left. Still needing money to meet existing commitments, the Congress voted to raise the towns’ assessments from £3000 to £4000 and recommended that taverners and retailers pay their excise taxes to Nicholas Gilman. In a separate action, it voted to allow the town selectmen to keep 5 percent of all excise taxes that they collected as a “...reward for their services.” The Congress again attempted to get the colony account books from George Jaffrey; he resisted until November and then surrendered them.42

In other action, the Congress, at the request of the
Continental Congress, ordered a census of the colony. Matthew Thornton asked the towns to include in their census report a listing of their ammunition and firearms, both working and non-working. The firearms census would be used by the Congress to assess the colony's future needs.43

While the Fourth Provincial Congress, during its first two sessions, may have considered its primary function to be providing for the defense of the colony, towns pushed the Congress to expand its function. They petitioned the Congress, for example, to give advice on or to solve local problems not related to defense. Most petitions were related to the preservation of an orderly society. With the Governor and the Assembly refusing to discuss anything but Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme, towns had nowhere else to turn. Portsmouth asked the Congress to pass a resolve against mobs from the countryside who roamed into town and disturbed the peace. Weare, Francestown, and New Boston asked what could be done to ensure that men who had been accused of being Tories, but acquitted, could live in peace. Mason asked that the Congress extradite from the army two men accused of stealing a cow. And Monadnock #5 (Marlborough) asked the Congress for permission to incorporate as a town. The Congress acted on all the petitions, except the one from Weare, Francestown, and New Boston.44

With Governor Wentworth's departure, the Congress
realized that it needed to formalize its relationship with the towns. While it had passed many measures that affected the towns, it had no means of enforcing them. Towns not swayed by the necessity of the measures were free to ignore them. However, with the Congress now solely responsible for the conduct of the war and for an orderly society, it needed the authority to enforce decisions. It needed to be officially recognized as the only government in New Hampshire. This was a momentous step, one which the Congress was not willing to take alone. It looked to the Continental Congress, itself an extra-legal body, for guidance and approval.

The Fourth Provincial Congress's instructions to Josiah Bartlett, who replaced John Sullivan in the Continental Congress, reflected the urgency of the situation. The instructions written on September 1, 1775, concluded with "We press you not to delay this Matter as its being speedily done, (your own knowledge of our Circumstances must inform you) will probably prevent the greatest Confusion among us."^45

Bartlett's instructions did not contain a specific request. When John Langdon asked the Congress for a "... Petition from our Convention [to the Continental Congress] to take Government ...," the Congress ignored the request. Bartlett and Langdon were free to interpret the instructions as they saw fit. In and out of Carpenters Hall, they lobbied for permission for New
Hampshire to take up civil government. On October 18, 1775, they presented Bartlett's instructions to the Continental Congress and asked for advice.46

The matter was referred to a five-member committee which included Massachusetts Bay's John Adams. Adams in his autobiography noted that he "... embraced with joy the opportunity of haranguing on the Subject... and of urging the [Continental] Congress to resolve on a general recommendation to all States to call Conventions and institute regular Governments." Adams's position was supported by John Rutledge (South Carolina), Samuel Ward (Rhode Island), (?) Lee (Virginia), Roger Sherman (Connecticut), Christopher Gadsden (South Carolina), Eliphalet Dyer (Connecticut), and others.47

On November 3, the Continental Congress voted on the Committee's report and

Resolved. That it be recommended to the provincial Convention of New Hampshire, to call a full and free representation of the people, and that the representatives, if they think it necessary, establish such a form of government, as, in their judgment, will best produce the happiness of the people, & most effectually secure peace and good order in the province, during the continuance of the present dispute between Great Britain and the colonies.48

Langdon and Bartlett rushed the Resolution to New Hampshire, but it arrived after the Congress had dissolved. However, the warrant for elections for the Fifth Provincial Congress anticipated a response from the
Continental Congress.

And in case there should be a recommendation from the Continental Congress for this Colony to Assume Government in any way that will require a house of Representatives, That the said Congress for this Colony be Impowered to Resolve themselves into such a House as may be recommended, and remain such for the aforesaid Term of one year. 49

In framing the election call, the Fourth Provincial Congress not only deferred to the authority of the Continental Congress, but also to the authority of the towns. If New Hampshire was to have a new government, it would be designed by duly elected representatives of the people.

The only stipulation of the Continental Congress's authorization for New Hampshire to take up government was that the new government be a temporary measure, lasting as long as the conflict with Great Britain. The Fifth Provincial Congress, elected under the new plan of representation, could design the government in any way that it felt would best meet its needs. Discussions on the form of government began on December 27, 1775, and concluded with the adoption of a constitution on January 5, 1776. 50

The constitution was the work of two committees. The Congress first appointed a fifteen man committee to create the structure of the new government. It consisted of Matthew Thornton, Neshech Weare, Ebenezer Thompson, Wyseman Claggett, Benjamin Giles, Philips White (South
Hampton), John Hurd, Israel Morey, Samuel Sherburne (Portsmouth), Clement March, John Dudley, James Bretton (Wyndham), Noah Emary (Exeter), Jonathan Blanchard (Merrimack, Bedford), and Jonathan Lovewell (Dunstable). All but White, Sherburne, Blanchard, and Lovewell had been members of the Fourth Provincial Congress. A second committee, really a sub-committee of the first, consisting of Thornton, Weare, Thompson, Claggett, and Giles, was charged with writing the constitution. The resulting document described both the new structure and the rationale for taking up government.51

The committees received no further instructions from the Continental Congress, but John Langdon and Josiah Bartlett provided some suggestions. The ideas were probably their own. Langdon and Bartlett suggested that New Hampshire model its government on that of Massachusetts. They recommended a small popularly elected House; a Council elected by the House; and no governor. In authorizing New Hampshire to assume civil government, the Continental Congress had discussed three branches, a governor, Council, and a House of Representatives.52

When he heard of the Continental Congress's action, John Sullivan wrote a long letter to the Fifth Provincial Congress urging that New Hampshire model its new government on Connecticut's and Pennsylvania's. He too, favored a House and a Council, but felt that both
branches should be directly elected by the people. He also favored the direct election of a governor. Sullivan, as "Publicus" had earlier, recommended annual elections.53

Both committees were weighted in favor of the older, more densely populated areas of the province. Fifty-three percent of the first committee and 40 percent of the second represented towns in Rockingham County. The committee's decisions reflected its members inherent bias. They found Langdon's and Bartlett's recommendations more palatable than Sullivan's. A small House, an indirectly elected Council, and no governor could result in the power of government remaining in the hands of those who traditionally controlled it, men from the seacoast area. The committee recommended that the Fifth Provincial Congress resolve itself into New Hampshire's First House of Representatives. It proposed that the house appoint a twelve member Council consisting of five men from Rockingham; two each from Strafford, Cheshire, and Hillsborough; and one from Grafton Counties. These two branches would jointly appoint the colony's civil officers. From the Sullivan proposal, the committee adopted the idea of annual elections, and stipulated that if the conflict with Great Britain extended for longer than a year, the people could vote for the councilor(s) who represented their county.54

The Congress adopted the plan of government and the
constitution, which attributed the necessity for the new
government to "...The Sudden & Abrupt Departure of his
Excellency John Wentworth Esq" our Late Governor..."
To implement the constitution, the Congress did resolve
itself into a House of Representatives and proceeded to
 elect the Council, consisting of Meshach Weare, Matthew
Thornton, William Whipple, Josiah Bartlett, and Nathaniel
Folsom for Rockingham County; Thomas Westbrook Waldron
and Ebenezer Thompson, for Strafford County; Wyseman
Claggett and Jonathan Blanchard for Hillsborough County;
Samuel Ashley and Benjamin Giles for Cheshire County; and
John Hurd for Grafton County. Waldron declined and was
replaced by Somersworth's John Wentworth, who had
recovered from recent his illness. The Council and the
House then proceeded to appoint the province's civil and
high military officers. By February 10, 1776, the initial
appointments were completed and the new government was in
place.55

The Fourth Provincial Congress did not seize power
through aggressive usurpation. It responded instead to
the necessity of governing when royal government in the
colony first broke down and then ended. It took it upon
itself to provide for the defense of the colony when the
General Court failed to do so. It assumed the
responsibility of maintaining law and order when Governor
Wentworth left the colony. As the only colony-wide
representative body capable of exercising authority in
this crisis, it could have announced that it had assumed
the powers of government. It did not do so. Instead it appealed to the Continental Congress for permission to act as the governing body of the colony and to the towns for permission to implement the Continental Congress's recommendations.

The First House of Representatives did not present the constitution to the towns for their approval. According to its interpretation of the Continental Congress's instructions, that was not necessary. During the next year, towns would examine the function and structure of their revolutionary government and use their right of petition to shape it into an institution that met their needs.
Chapter Notes


3. Ibid., 7:373.

4. NHSP, 7:470. Somersworth voters had elected Speaker John Wentworth to represent them at the Fourth Provincial Congress. However, he was too ill to attend both the General Assembly and the Provincial Congress; he chose to attend only the Assembly. See Somersworth Town Records, vol. 1, p. 250, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire State Library (hereafter cited as NHSL).

5. Matthew Thornton to Governor John Wentworth, June 8, 1775, NHSP, 7:509.

6. Ibid., 7:473, 477, 480, 503, 505, 507.


8. New Hampshire Congress to John Sullivan and John Langdon, May 23, 1775, NHSP, 7:481-482 (quotation from 481.)

9. Ibid., 7:482.

10. Ibid., 7:481. For the list of towns, see "A List of Towns & Parishes with the Respective sums Apportioned to [them] by the Committee Appointed for that purpose which have not yet paid, same Agreeable to request of the Provincial Convention . . . ," Treasury Papers, Record
Group 5, Box 9, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire Archives (hereafter cited as NHA.) The amount of money owed may have been more than £225-3-0. There is a hole in the document where it had been folded. The day after the list was prepared, Greenland, New Ipswich, Plainfield, Walpole, and Hanover paid their assessment. It is probable that their representatives paid the money out of their own resources. Certainly some delegates could not have traveled home on the evening of May 23 and returned on the morning of the 24th with the money in hand. By September, Kensington, Plaistow, Lyme, Swanzey, Orford, and East Kingston paid.

Like the towns, the Congress did not pay its bills promptly. It owed John Sullivan a total of £350-7-6 for his services in the Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775. Sullivan received the last installment in 1789. See “The State of New Hampshire in Account Current with John Sullivan for Services in Congress in the Years 1774 and 1775” also located in Record Group 5, Box 9, NHA.


12. Ibid., 7:508.


15. Ibid., 7:510.

16. Ibid., 7:485.


18. Governor John Wentworth to General Gage, June 15, 1775, and Governor John Wentworth to [Paul Wentworth], June 29, 1775, *NHSP* 7:381-382. Paul Wentworth’s name is


21. Ibid., 7:546. In New Hampshire Dr. Eleazer Wheelock, founder of Dartmouth College; John Hurd, Haverhill representative and former secretary to Governor Wentworth; and the selectmen of Conway kept the Provincial Congress posted. Friendly Indians and missionaries were the sources of their information. The Congress appointed Jonathan Childs, Lyme; Oliver Ashley, Claremont; Timothy Bedel, Bath; and John Wheelock, Hanover, to collect and disseminate intelligence information. They represented communities along the path of previous Indian attacks. See *NHSP*, 7:547-548, 569-570.


23. New Hampshire Committee of Safety to their Delegates in the Continental Congress, July 8, 1775, *NHSP*, 7:559-560 (quotation from 560.)

24. Ibid., 7:546.

25. Ibid., 7:537, 543.

26. Theodore Atkinson to Governor John Wentworth, July 7, 1775, and Theodore Atkinson to William Whipple, July 6, 1775, Ibid., 7:383, 553, 543. The Congress also formed a committee to take the records of the Grafton County Court of Common Pleas, General Sessions of the Peace, and Court of Probate from John Fenton. Fenton lived in Portsmouth, but held many Grafton County offices. See *NHSP*, 7:544. The names of the public officials were taken from Nathaniel Mills & John Hicks, *Mills and Hicks British and American Register: with an Almanack For the Year 1775.*
For All The New-England Province (Boston, 1774), pp. 82-84, Evans # 13440-13441.

27. NHSP, 7:543, 553 (source of quotation.) The Congress issued its clarification statement after it received a Portsmouth petition protesting the action. See NHSP, 7:551.


31. Ibid., 7:584. Jonathan Childs was from Lyme. Although no man from Lyme ever served in the General Assembly, Lyme residents participated in the election for the 1775 Assembly.


33. Ibid.; NHSP, 7:606. When Hollis voters learned that they would be allowed two representatives under the new plan, they wrote to the Congress that they "... highly approved of the Plan proposed by the ... Congress as a Rule for a General Representation. ..." See Hollis Town Papers, Box labeled Holderness to Hookset, NHA.

34. NHSP, 7:606.

35. Ibid.; Meshech Weare, in a defense of the actions of the Fourth and Fifth Provincial Congresses, wrote

With Respect to the objection that the representatives must have 200 & Estate I shall only observe that it has been generally supposed to be for the Common Safety that those persons who are entrusted with the Desposal of Our Estates should have some Estate of their Own Subject to the same.
See "I have lately met with a Pamphlet," Weare Papers, Executive Records, Record Group 1, Box 19, NHA.


37. Ibid., 7:644-645. The first item voted on "That the Delegates or Representatives to be chosen to represent this Colony in Future shall be chosen by the voices of Votes of the Electors and not by the value of their Estates." has never been adequately explained. Perhaps this vote may have referred to delegates to the Continental Congress. They were the only "colony representatives" elected at the time. Deborah Down in "The New Hampshire Constitution of 1776: Weathervane of Conservatism," *Historical New Hampshire* 31 (Winter 1979):173 mistakenly assumes that this vote resulted in a change in the distribution of political power in the state. It did not. Only five days later the vote was repealed.


40. Ibid., 7:657.

41. Ibid., 7:657-660.

42. Ibid., 7:607, 609, 648, 655.

43. Ibid., 7:724.
44. Frances Town, New Boston, weare, to the Honorable the Provincial Congress . . ., July 18, 1775, Ibid., 12:649-650; Committee of Portsmouth to the New Hampshire Congress, June 2, 1775, 7:502; Complaint of Committee of Mason to New Hampshire Congress, June 20, 1775, 7:535-536, and 7:549. The answers to the petitions are found on 7:497, 535, 549. The manuscript copy of the Frances Town, New Boston, and Weare petition indicates that it was not answered. See Legislative Petitions, Record Group 3, Box 3, Folder 8, NHA.


46. Josiah Bartlett and John Langdon to Matthew Thornton, October 2, 1775, NHSP, 7:615. While Bartlett's name is on the letter, Langdon probably wrote it. At the time the letter was written, Bartlett was recovering from small pox and was not attending the Congress. Bartlett and Langdon described their efforts to sway the opinion of the Continental Congress delegates in a letter to the Fourth Provincial Congress, November 3, 1775, NHSP, 7:611-612. Readers of John Gemmill, "The Problems of Power: New Hampshire Government During the Revolution." Historical New Hampshire 22 (Summer, 1967): 29 may believe that New Hampshire appealed to the Continental Congress for advice on "taking up government" on May 15, 1775. Gemmill mistakenly attributes a letter on that subject from Massachusetts Bay to New Hampshire. See NHSP 7:475-476.


49. NHSP, 7:660. The records show that Bartlett's and Langdon's letter arrived on November 24, 1775, nine days after the Fourth Provincial Congress dissolved. See "Records of the N.H. Committee of Safety," p. 25.
50. NHSP, 7:703 and 8:2.

51. Ibid., 7:703-704.


54. NHSP, 8:2-4.

55. Ibid., 8:6, 20.
CHAPTER V

TOWNS ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NEW GOVERNMENT

In a broadside, dated March 19, 1776, the new Council and House of Representatives proclaimed that they had "... chosen & Appointed the proper Officers for the Administration of Justice in the several Counties..." They declared that only the new county officials had legal authority and former officials who continued to act would be "deemed Inimical to their country."¹

In January towns had received a broadside proclaiming the assumption of civil government by the Fifth Provincial Congress. With the publication of the March proclamation, the towns entered into a new relationship with their revolutionary government. There was now in place a provincial government, recognized as a legitimate government by the Continental Congress and the congresses of the other colonies, that had assumed all the authority and the functions of the old royal government.

Faced with little alternative, towns chose to accept the authority of the new government. They were determined, however, to use their right of petition to
influence the government's actions. Both towns and individual townsmen sent petitions to the first House of Representatives to mold it into an institution that met their local needs.

These local petitions can be divided into two broad categories, those that addressed the functions of government and those that addressed the structure of government. Most of the petitions dealt with the functions. Towns wanted their provincial government to provide for their local defensive needs, to give advice or to solve local problems that local leaders had been unable to cope with, and to pass legislation which resolved common problems facing many towns. The first House of Representatives assumed all of these functions. However, before it acted, it relied upon the towns to demonstrate the significance of the local problem.

The highest priority of frontier towns in all New Hampshire counties was their local defense, and the House of Representatives responded to their needs. As the war with Great Britain escalated, frontier townsmen feared that they would be attacked by the British, aided by sympathetic Canadians and Indians. Such an attack appeared imminent in May 1776, after the defeat of New Hampshire troops, under the command of Colonel Timothy Bedel, at the Cedars, a place on the St. Lawrence River about 45 miles north of Montreal. The New Hampshire men were part of the American forces that had invaded Canada
in late 1775.2

When news of Bedel's defeat reached New Hampshire, forty-one frontier towns petitioned the House for arms and ammunition so they could provide for their own defense in case the British troops followed the fleeing Americans into New Hampshire. The towns petitions reflected the seriousness of their fears. Westmoreland's petition was typical.

Gentlemen we have Jest heard of the Retreat of our Nothard armey Which Puts us in feare that the Savages Will be Down upon our frontteers and we in this Towne Being verye Short for amunition; as Well as Sun armes Wanting; . . . Without Which we Cannot Defand our Selves. Nor our Country in order that each man have one Pound of Powder we Want in this Towne sixty wait; and we Want four hundred flints one hundred w of Lead and Twenty guns. . . .3

Many of the petitions were as specific as Westmoreland's, and were based on the military census the towns had taken in 1775. Through their representatives or their agents, towns asked for powder and lead by weight and flints and guns by number.

The House took a month to review the petitions. They voted to provide guns and ammunition to all but seven of the towns. If the frontier towns had not requested help, they probably would not have received it. There is no evidence that the House used the military census compiled by the Fourth Provincial Congress to send towns arms and ammunition automatically.4

In addition to petitions involving defense, towns
sent petitions to the House asking it to intervene in local problems that local leaders had been unable to solve. Before it acted, the House required evidence that an attempt had been made to resolve the issue at the town level. When New Town (Newton) failed to reach an agreement with Joseph Bartlett, whom it claimed fraudulently represented the town in the Fourth Provincial Congress, it asked the House of Representatives to resolve the dispute.

On April 20, 1775, New Town, outraged by Lexington and Concord, had elected Joseph Bartlett, Josiah Bartlett's brother-in-law, to attend the Third Provincial Congress. When Bartlett returned, he reported that he was to continue representing his town for an additional six months, and he took his seat in the Fourth Provincial Congress. The town eventually learned that the Third and Fourth Provincial Congresses were not the same group, and that there should have been a separate election. The town reproached Bartlett for his deception, but agreed to let him keep his seat.

What the town did not know was that the delegates to the Fourth Provincial Congress would vote to pay themselves, and that it would be taxed to pay its share of Bartlett's expenses. When the tax bill arrived, the town notified the Congress of the fraud. A town committee tried to persuade Bartlett to accept only the travel allowance which was paid by the Congress. When
Bartlett refused, New Town felt it had no choice but to ask the House to hear testimony from both sides and give a decision. A House committee found in favor of the town, and Bartlett had to return all the money he had received.6

Private individuals also petitioned the House to intervene in disputes in their behalf that they were having with their town. The House applied the same criterion to private petitions that it did to town petitions. When Zaccheus Clough of Poplin, (Freemont) petitioned the House to become involved in a dispute between him and his town, the House refused to act because there had been no attempt to solve the problem at the local level.

Residents of Poplin called Clough a Tory, and accused him of having diverted some of the town's donation to Boston to his own use. Clough, who had represented Poplin in the First and Second Provincial Congresses, had opposed the town's decision to aid Boston. A selectman at the time of the vote, he was turned out of office the following year.7

Clough cleared himself of the charge when he produced a signed statement from the Boston Committee of Donations attesting that he had delivered one yoke of oxen (presumably purchased with the Poplin's (20) to Captain Isaac Foster, chairman of the Charlestown Committee of Donations.8
As a result of petitions from private individuals, the House occasionally acted as a Court of Appeals, reviewing and passing judgment on decisions made by local Committees of Safety. One successful petitioner, Oliver Parker of Stoddard, petitioned the House to review the judgment of the Committees of Safety from Stoddard, Marlow, and Camden which had ruled that he was "... notoriously Disaffected to the American Cause" and that he was to "be confin'd to the Lot of Land his house stands on." Parker had been ordered by the Stoddard Committee to appear before the combined committees of the three towns to answer charges of being "inimical to America." Parker, who was not informed of the exact nature of the charge, refused to appear. The meeting took place without him. Parker was accused not only of writing a scurrilous piece entitled "A Receipt to make a Whig," but also of breaking down Nathaniel Emerson's fence, allowing his cattle to graze on Emerson's property. 9

In his petition to the House, Parker claimed that there was no evidence of his guilt and he asked for advice on how to prove his innocence. Twenty-one of Parker's neighbors petitioned the House to hear his case. They praised Parker for his military record during the French wars, noted his general good character, and claimed that the case against him was based on "malice and falsehood." 10

In September 1776, the House agreed to hear Parker's
petition, but it did not do so until March 1777. After hearing Parker’s testimony, the House was not convinced of his innocence, but it agreed that his sentence was too harsh. It ordered Parker to post a £500 bond and ruled that he should be confined to the town limits of Stoddard for one year. By November 2, 1778, the charges against Parker included counterfeiting and he was sentenced to prison by the Committee of Safety.11

The insistence of the House of Representative that towns and individuals try solving problems on the local level before requesting help from the House effectively reduced the work load for representatives. The practice had another result. In forcing towns to rely upon their own resources to solve problems, the House encouraged inter-town communication, fostered the development of regional bonds, and nurtured feelings of self reliance.

In addition to appealing to the House for help with particular local problems, towns used petitions to prod the first House of Representatives into examining problems of a much broader nature, problems that could only be solved by legislation. Periodically the first House of Representatives established joint committees of the House and Council to set priorities for a particular session. If one compares the stated objectives with the legislation passed, it is possible to trace the effect of the towns’ petitions in altering the schedule of priorities.
An Act Impowering Sundry Committees To Cause Sluices To Be Made, In All Dams . . . , passed in July 1776 and An Act For Regulating The Prices of Sundry Articles Therein Enumerated, passed in January 1777, were the direct result of town petitions. On March 7, 1776, the House agreed to hear a petition from the residents of Derryfield (Manchester) requesting that dams be opened so that alewives could pass from the Merrimack River into the Great Cohos Brook to spawn. The owner of most of the dams in the area, John Goffe, agreed that opening the dams would be in the public interest. In a letter to the House, he stated that he had done so in the past and would continue to do so in the future. As a result of the Derryfield petition, the House investigated the practices of the dam owners along Beaver Brook, another tributary of the Merrimack. Their investigation resulted in an act requiring the dams to be open from May 1 to June 15 each year, a time corresponding to the spawning season.12

It was not so easy for the towns to get the House to address the issue of runaway prices. The regulation of prices had been a town concern since the Fall of 1774. For over two years the Continental Congresses and the Provincial Congresses had been issuing recommendations, but there had been no specific guidelines or means of enforcement. Towns became involved as soon as they began implementing the Continental Association. Article Nine
of the document stated that imported goods were to be sold "at the rates" charged in the previous twelve months. Article Thirteen stated that "... all Manufactures of the country [will] be sold at reasonable prices. ..." Former Speaker John Wentworth, in his address made at the conclusion of the Second Provincial Congress, urged residents to "... strictly adhere to the Association of the late Continental Congress, and deal with the violators of it in the manner therein recommended." Nowhere in the address did Wentworth specifically mention prices, yet many towns seized upon price stability as an item in their statement on accepting the Association.13

For almost a year the residents of New Ipswich, challenged by merchant David Hills, struggled for an accurate interpretation of the Continental Congress's recommendations. In February, March, and July of 1775, the Committee of Inspection summoned Hills to account for raising his prices. On the first two occasions, Hills responded that he did not understand the Association; on the third he questioned the committee's interpretation. Hills claimed that he ought to be able to raise his prices enough to yield the accepted 30 per cent profit. The committee was not swayed by Hills's arguments. In accordance with the requirements of the Continental Association, they published a notice in the newspaper outlining Hills's activities and "... advis[ed] all
good people to break off all dealing with him."\(^{14}\)

The notice in the paper provoked a public debate in the press between Hills and the New Ipswich Committee of Safety Chairman, Joseph Bates. Hills presented receipts from his wholesalers in an attempt to prove that his prices were reasonable, but the town supported the committee's action.\(^{15}\)

Although outwardly confident that they were correct, the members of the New Ipswich Committee had some inner doubts. In September they wrote to Lieutenant Josiah Brown, one of their townsman who was in the army, requesting him to ask General John Sullivan the precise meaning of Articles Nine and Thirteen. Sullivan had been a delegate to the First Continental Congress, the group that developed the Continental Association. Sullivan's reply, if made, has not been found.\(^{16}\)

There is no record of New Ipswich asking the Fourth Provincial Congress for advice, but if it had the Congress would have agreed with New Ipswich's handling of the Hills case. On September 1, 1775, the Fourth Provincial Congress

Resolved that any person selling . . . any . . . English Goods at an Extravagant price, contrary to the Express Tenor of the Continental Association, and not Dealt with by the Committee of such Town . . . may be cited before the Committee of any Neighboring Town within Ten Miles. . . .\(^{17}\)

In November 1775, Portsmouth residents, outraged by
a rise in beef prices, pleaded with the Fourth Provincial Congress to take action. The Congress ordered the offending butchers to return their excess profits. In December, the town, again disturbed by a general rise in prices, appointed a committee to investigate and make recommendations. The committee, which included Fourth Provincial Congress delegate William Whipple, stated

"... we are of opinion that [regulating prices] is too extensive as well as too delicate an affair to be in the power of any Town Committee to rectify. We therefore look up to the superior Wisdom of the Congress intreating that they will take up the matter on a general plan. . . ."

Although it received the petition, the Congress did not respond.

The Portsmouth petition was followed in early 1776 by one from the Merrimack River towns of Newbury Port, Newbury, Bradford, Andover, Boxford, Salisbury, Haverhill, Methuen, Londonderry, Plaistow, New Salem and Atkinson. Residents of these New Hampshire and Massachusetts towns who traded with one another complained that their purchasing power was shrinking as selfish merchants and farmers "engross[ed] the most Saleable articles" and doubled their retail price. According to Article Thirteen of the Association, American goods were to be sold at reasonable prices. The Committees of Safety from these towns pleaded with the First House of Representatives to take the matter under
consideration and to effect a remedy. 19

As a result of the petitions, the House created a joint committee to study the problem. No action can be traced to the committee. However, in May, the Exeter New Hampshire Gazette published a recommendation from Councilor Matthew Thornton urging residents not to take advantage of the scarcity of goods by raising prices. 20

Thornton's plea went unheeded. In mid-summer the House received petitions, signed by 132 men from Exeter, complaining about merchants who engrossed and raised the prices on salt, woolens, linens and other West Indies products. The petitioners included Noah Emery, one of Exeter's representatives. The House's reaction was to republish Thornton's newspaper address. 21

Frustrated by the New Hampshire House's failure to act on their February petition, a group of eleven New Hampshire and Massachusetts towns met at Dracut, Massachusetts, on November 5, 1776, to again discuss the problem of rising prices. They decided to convene a larger group to discuss prices and the resulting depreciation of paper money. Invitations were sent to thirty-three New Hampshire towns and fifteen Massachusetts towns. Eighteen New Hampshire towns, Londonderry, Hampstead, Plaistow, Atkinson, Pelham, Dunstable, Merrimack, Bedford, Derryfield, Goffstown, Hollis, Mason, Raby, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Wilton, Lyndeborough, Nottingham-West, and nine Massachusetts
towns sent delegates to the November 26 meeting. They were joined by Ed Jewett, who represented sixteen uninvited towns from Grafton and Cheshire counties.22

The group voted to petition the General Courts of both New Hampshire and of Massachusetts Bay, asking them ". . . to enact such Laws and make such Provision, and Regulation, as in their Operation, may speedily, and effectually, remedy the evils of which we so justly complain. . . ."23

Finally, the New Hampshire General Court realized that the situation called for more than mere recommendations and it moved quickly to solve the problem. A committee of both houses reviewed the petition sent to New Hampshire and recommended that a committee be sent to Massachusetts Bay to develop criteria for a bill. Three weeks later the committee made its first report. After two days of debate, there was agreement on what items to include in the bill. The act, passed on January 18, 1777, listed various agricultural and manufactured products, and specified their maximum price per unit.24

The relationship of town petitions to the fish and prices acts was not an isolated example. In many other cases involving counterfeiting, spying, and disloyalty to the patriot cause, towns also recognized problems before the state government did. In the Spring of 1776, the Hanover and Lebanon Committees of Safety investigated
local counterfeiting activities, discovered the culprit and confiscated his material. Unsure of its authority, the Hanover committee reported the action to the House and asked, "We would wish to have our duty in that & other cases more particularly stated, that we may not be exposed to exceed our bounds." On June 6, 1776, the House and Council set as one of their priorities developing a bill against counterfeiting. An Act to Prevent the Forging & Altering Bills of Public Credit... passed on July 3, 1776.2

The Cheshire County Committee of Safety complained to the House and Council in August 1776, that there were spies for the British, in their area. The committee asked

. . . that some Resolve pass . . . to hinder their progress, we would not think to Dictate but we humbly Conceive the method Come into by the Governor and Committee of Safety of Connecticut would be a Ready method to accomplish the aforesd Designs. . . .26

The Cheshire County petition was followed by one from Claremont, reporting that the town contained a large number of "Neuters," who now that the Fifth Provincial Congress had resolved itself into a House of Representatives, acted as if they were in a state of nature. The "Neuters" did not contribute their share to the war effort, ignored Fast Days, labored on the Sabbath, and freely moved from town to town, although many had been confined to the limits of Claremont by town
committees implementing recommendations of the Provincial Congresses. The town asked that a measure be passed to regulate the conduct of such offenders. The House took both petitions under consideration and on January 17, 1777, passed *An Act Against Treason* . . . and *An Act For Preventing, and Punishing Such Offences Against the State As Do Not Amount to Treason*, which solved the problem of spying and general disloyalty.

While towns were successful in using petitions to influence the functions of their government, they did not succeed in using petitions to change its structure. Carping began as soon as towns received the call for the Fifth Provincial Congress. Towns in the seacoast area, led by Portsmouth, and towns in Cheshire and Grafton Counties, led by Plainfield and Lebanon, began two separate petition drives to change the structure of the government. Disaffected seacoast towns opposed the resolution of the Fifth Provincial Congress into a House of Representatives and appointing government officials. Towns in the frontier objected initially to the new plan for electing representatives. As their petition drive gained momentum, it engulfed other issues. Both groups felt that major changes in the structure of the government should have been put to a vote by the towns.

Portsmouth articulated the seacoast's opposition to the proposed action by the Fifth Provincial Congress on December 20, 1775, when the town met to elect its
representatives. It voiced its objections in the instructions to its delegates, Samuel Cutts, Peirce Long, and Samuel Sherburne. William Whipple, one of Portsmouth's delegates to the Third and Fourth Provincial Congresses, was on the committee to write the instructions. The objection to "taking up" government focused on one issue. How would this action affect the opinions of the British people?

Whipple and his committee argued that the Continental Congress had described the conflict to the British people as the colonists' struggle with Parliament to preserve the traditional rights of Englishmen. The enemy had been identified as Parliament, not the British nation; the Continental Congress had urged the British people to pressure their government for a change in its colonial policy. If the New Hampshire Congress were now to resolve itself into a House of Representatives and appoint government officials, Parliament could use that action to persuade the British people that the struggle was not over rights, but was a movement for independence. The colonists would then lose the presumed support of the British nation. Portsmouth townsmen felt that the risk of British negative public opinion was too great. The Congress, they argued, should stay a Congress and not assume the nature of a government.28

Portsmouth's assumption that the English people would support the colonies in their opposition to
Parliament was a false hope. By December 1775, lives had been lost on both sides, and the Continental Congress had raised an army. It appeared that the difficulties between the colonists and Parliament would be solved by armed conflict. Yet Portsmouth residents continued to believe that a reconciliation could be obtained if the British people pressured Parliament for a change. Seven months earlier, Paine Wingate had expressed the same hope immediately after the battles at Lexington and Concord.

It is impossible to determine how many towns in other areas of the colony were clinging to the hope of a reconciliation effected by British public opinion. Almost certainly Portsmouth’s fears of independence were discussed. The town published its instructions to its representatives in the New Hampshire Gazette. By 1775, the Gazette circulated to Hollis, Hinsdale, Walpole, Plymouth, Rochester, and points in between.²⁹

When the Fifth Provincial Congress met, there were no delegates from at least twenty-four towns. Some had not sent representative to the previous Provincial Congresses. Twelve of those towns, however, Sandown, Hawke, Nottingham, Madbury, Wolfeborough, New Boston, Swanzey, Jaffrey, Rindge, Fitzwilliam, Lebanon, and Hanover, had been represented at the Fourth Provincial Congress. Their representatives had participated in the vote on the new plan of representation and in the discussions on “taking up civil government.” By voting
not to participate in the Fifth Provincial Congress, the towns expressed their dissatisfaction with the structure or the proposed actions of their government.30

The members of the Fifth Provincial Congress voted by a two to one majority to adopt New Hampshire’s constitution, to resolve themselves into a House of Representatives and to appoint the Council and other government officials. Those who opposed the measure may have counted the number of towns that were not present and assumed that those towns were not there because they too objected to the Fifth Provincial Congress assuming the nature of a government.31

On January 9, 1776, four days after the Fifth Provincial Congress, now the first House of Representatives, adopted its constitution and proceeded to appoint the council, New Hampshire Gazette editor Daniel Fowle, perhaps feeling that Portsmouth’s views on independence were shared by many New Hampshire towns, published a lengthy article signed by “Junius.” The anonymous author accused the members of the Fifth Provincial Congress of duplicity. He stated

We began the controversy on this principle, to seek: Redress of Grievances; since, we have lost sight of the object and are in quest of what will terminate most certainly in our ruin and destruction; I mean, INDEPENDENCY upon Great Britain; a step that the public are exceedingly averse to; but the public in general are ignorant of the design and tendency of the conduct of their Representatives, . . .32
"Junius" then proceeded to ask and answer two questions: "1st. Can we gain INDEPENDENCY? 2nd. If we gain, can we support ourselves in it?" His answer to the first was "no." He supported his arguments by discussing the American lack of a navy to defend its coast line, and the difficulties the colonies had been having in raising, financing, and equipping an army. His answer to the second, assuming he was wrong on the first, was also "no." He supported his position by noting the lack of manufacturing in the colonies, and the loss of trade with Great Britain that would result from independence. "Junius" attacked the way the Congress had interpreted the Continental Congress's recommendations. He noted the potential abuse of power when a House appoints a Council and the two together appoint the civil and high military officers of the colony.

The day after the Junius article appeared, Portsmouth citizens held a special town meeting to discuss the provincial government's actions. The townsmen voted to petition the House to reverse the process of assuming government. They included in the petition the instructions they had given to their representatives. Any action which looked like a move towards independence would alienate the British public and jeopardize their efforts to change Parliament's colonial policy.
Like the Junius article, the Portsmouth petition accused the Congress of not acting in the best interests of the people. It stated

"... we are of Opinion, that the Inhabitants of the Colony, do not generally approve of this measure; we would therefore have wished; to have had the minds of the People fully taken on such a Momentous, Concernment & to have known the Plan before it was adopted & carried into Execution which is their Inherent right."

The Portsmouth town meeting concluded with a vote "... to write circular Letters to all Neighboring Towns to desire they will unite with us in preferring Petitions to the Congress. ..." 34

As residents of the largest mercantile community in the colony, many Portsmouth voters may have been influenced by a fear of the disastrous results of independence outlined by Junius. At least one prominent Portsmouth merchant, William Whipple, confided to his mother his fears that the colonists would be defeated in any military conflict with Great Britain. 35

On the same day of the Portsmouth town meeting, the representatives from North Hill (part of North Hampton), Newington, Portsmouth, Dover, Rye, Kensington, Stratham, Rochester, Sandwich, Moultonborough, and Lee presented a petition to their colleagues in the House protesting "the Present Plan of Taking up Government." The representatives' protest equated the Congress's actions with a movement towards independence. They questioned why
such action was taken by small New Hampshire, and not by much larger New York or Virginia. The representatives' main concern was that the new government was not what the people expected or wanted. In addition, they accused Josiah Bartlett and John Langdon of badgering members of the Continental Congress to grant New Hampshire permission to take up government.\textsuperscript{36}

The representatives' petition was followed by separate petitions from Portsmouth, Greenland, Newmarket, Dover, Rye, Rochester, Brentwood, and Stratham. These towns held special town meetings as a result of Portsmouth's circular letter. All the petitions expressed a fear of independence and stressed that citizens should have been consulted before the new form of government was implemented.\textsuperscript{37}

On January 18, 1776, the House and Council assembled to discuss the town petitions against the new form of government, presented and argued by Portsmouth attorney John Pickering, whom the petitioners hired for the purpose. After hearing the case the House agreed to refer the problem to the Continental Congress and the petitioners agreed to abide by its decision. Meshech Weare, aided by Israel Morey, David Gilman and Stephen Evans gathered all the petitions, drafted a cover letter, and sent the materials to William Whipple and Josiah Bartlett in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{38}

Bartlett was not happy when he received the packet
of materials. He had read Portsmouth's instructions to its delegates in the Gazette, and knew of the fears of independence. To calm them, he had sent John Langdon a copy of Thomas Paine's recently published Common Sense, which he asked Langdon to "lend round to the people." Neither Paine's blunt logic nor his stirring rhetoric, however, had worked the desired effect on the cautious minds of New Hampshire's very reluctant revolutionaries.

After reading the materials, Bartlett wrote to John Langdon describing his embarrassment when presenting the petitions to his colleagues in the Continental Congress.

President [John Hancock] . . . asked us what was the question the Colony wanted to have put to the Congress for their answer as he said he could not find out by reading the papers, and neither Col. Whipple nor I could inform him; for the order of Congress to take up civil Govt. in such a manner as the Colony should think proper nobody can deny, and that the Colony had taken up such a form as was most agreeable to majority, is not disputed; that a number disliked it and protested against it is set forth, but what the Congress . . . will report is uncertain, but for the honor of the Province I wish it had been kept at home.

By May the Continental Congress was seriously considering declaring the colonies independent from Great Britain. By comparison the problems in New Hampshire seemed inconsequential. In New Hampshire, the question of independence was not an issue to be decided quickly. Josiah Bartlett and William Whipple notified Meshech
Weare of the Continental Congress's discussions on May 28, 1776, and asked

We sho'd be glad to know the sentiments of our Colony on the important subject of a total separation from Great Britain. Let our own opinions be what they may, we think ourselves in duty bound to act agreeable to the sentiments of our constituents.41

When Weare did not respond, Bartlett repeated his request and also wrote to Nathaniel Folsome and John Langdon, hoping that they would use their influence to pressure the House to consider the request. On June 15, 1776, the House and Council unanimously voted

WE DO, therefore Declare that it is the opinion of this Assembly that our Delegates at the Continental Congress should be Instructed, and they are hereby Instructed to join with the other Colonies in Declaring THE THIRTEEN UNITED COLONIES, a FREE & INDEPENDENT STATE...42

The concerns of the seacast towns, dormant since late January, were now dead. As they had promised, the protesters now agreed to abide by the recommendations of the Continental Congress. If the Continental Congress wanted to declare all thirteen colonies independent, New Hampshire, too, would cast its vote for independence. The state's reluctant revolutionaries again deferred to a higher authority.

Although it resulted in no change in the structure of the government, the seacast towns' protest was significant. It shows that there was dissent within the revolutionary government. Men like William Whipple who
had been the strongest advocate of reforms in the British system, could not support actions that smacked of independence. And they felt obligated to make their position known. Like true British citizens, however, they agreed to abide by the decisions of the majority.

The seacoast protest also cautions us against over-emphasizing New Hampshire's first constitution and its implementation. Undoubtedly the Fifth Provincial Congress did assume functions previously reserved for the Crown, but it did so as a temporary measure to cope with an emergency situation. When it was time for the United Colonies to vote for independence from Great Britain, New Hampshire was expected to cast its vote with the others. Its constitution and form of government gave the colony no special status.

A protest of a different kind against the structure of the new government, this one primarily from towns in Grafton and Cheshire Counties, was more wide-spread and much longer lived than the seacoast protest. It was not resolved until 1792. In their first year, the protesters identified what they perceived as a problem, demonstrated its significance, and proposed a solution. They actively recruited people to their cause and publicized their ideas in two political pamphlets. While many of the protesters were geographically isolated, they were philosophically on the cutting edge of liberal political thought. Had their ideas been accepted, New Hampshire
might have had an egalitarian government in which all
towns were represented in the House of Representatives
and all adult males were potential office holders.

Like Portsmouth, towns in Grafton and Cheshire
Counties that objected to the government's new structure
began their protest when they met to elect delegates to
the Fifth Provincial Congress. Fitzwilliam, classed with
Swanzey, held a special town meeting prior to the
election. At the meeting townsmen "Voted that it is the
opinion of the Town that by being coupled with Swanzey
they have not a free . . . representation agreeable to
the advice of the Continental Congress." A town
committee was charged to go to Swanzey on the day of the
election to explain why the town would not participate.
The committee must have been persuasive. Swanzey also
decided not to elect a delegate to the Fifth Provincial
Congress.43

Voters from Rindge, Jaffrey, and Peterborough Slip
met in Rindge on December 8, 1775, to elect their
delegate. After careful consideration, the towns decided
that each was entitled to its own representative. The
meeting broke into two groups. Rindge voters elected
Enoch Hale; Jaffrey voters, William Smiley. Presumably
Peterborough residents voted with one of the other two
towns, though the record is unclear. During the next ten
days, residents of Rindge and Jaffrey contacted voters in
Fitzwilliam and New Ipswich (Hillsborough County).
Together the four towns petitioned the Fifth Provincial Congress "... that Every Incorporated Town in this Colony have free Liberty to send a Representative of their own Choice. ..." 44

The petitioners argued that there could be no fair system of taxation if there was not a free representation. They noted that the system of classing towns together to choose one representative resulted in basic inequalities and practical problems. Whenever two towns were classed together, the larger town would always be able to dominate the smaller town. How could voters from classed towns make intelligent decisions when they did not "understand the qualifications and principles" of men from other towns? How could delegates fairly represent towns other than their own, when they were not familiar with the problems of a town in which they did not reside? 45

The Fifth Provincial Congress rejected the petition and refused to seat both Hale and Smiley. It ordered a new election in Rindge, Jaffrey, and Peterborough Slip. Six months later the towns complied. Enoch Hale returned to Exeter to take his seat in the house in June 1776. 46

The six towns in the Hanover class, Hanover, Lebanon, Pelham (Enfield), Cannan, Cardigan (Orange), and Grafton, returned the election writ to the Fifth Provincial Congress without the name of a delegate. The writ was accompanied by a petition from John Wheelock,
the town's agent, explaining the town's objections to the plan for representation. The Congress dismissed the petition and ordered a new election.47

The towns in the Hanover class, irate that their petition received so little consideration, saw this exercise of congressional power as being just as arbitrary as the recent acts of the British government. To try to get a fair hearing for their concerns, the towns chose a committee to write circular letters to all towns in Grafton and Cheshire Counties. The letters urged towns to consider the inherent inequities in grouping towns together to elect one representative. They repeated the arguments made by New Ipswich, Fitzwilliam, Rindge, and Jeffrey in their petition to the House and added the difficulties some townsmen faced in traveling long distances to cast their votes. The writers also attacked the $200 property qualification for representatives "... which ... may in some instances prove prejudicial to the Election of persons most Suitable to that Important trust." 48

The circular letters prompted a number of inter-town meetings held in January, February, and March 1776, coordinated by a group called the United Committees. Their purpose was to find some way of presenting their grievances to the House of Representatives, while at the same time assuring the House that the towns supported the measures of the Continental Congress and the war effort.
The method the towns decided upon was the publication of a pamphlet. Because the United Committees could not get the work printed in New Hampshire, the pamphlet, entitled *An Address of the Inhabitants of the Town of Plainfield, Lebanon, Pelham, Cannan, Cardigan, Hanover, Lime, Orford, Haverhill, Bath, and Landaff, to the Inhabitants of the Several Towns in the Colony of New-Hampshire*, was printed in Connecticut. The pamphlet was ready for distribution in July, 1776.49

Between the time of the towns' initial protest in December 1775, and the publication of *An Address of the Inhabitants*, the Fifth Provincial Congress had resolved itself into the First House of Representatives and had appointed the Council and other colony officials. These actions convinced the pamphlet's authors that the new government was not operating in the best interests of the people. They moved their arguments away from the practical difficulties facing classed towns to the arbitrary exercise of power by the Fifth Provincial Congress in implementing the recommendations of the Continental Congress to the basic defects in the new government that the Congress had created. Throughout the pamphlet, the authors juxtaposed their relationship with the House of Representatives with the colonies' relationship with Great Britain. To them, the arguments of no taxation without representation applied equally to both.
Basic to the towns' protest was their belief that by appointing a Council and developing plans for the 1776 election, the House of Representatives illegally created a permanent form of government and not a temporary form as had been recommended by the Continental Congress. The new government, they complained, was like "a little horn, growing up in the place where the other was broken off." The new Council was appointed, just like the old one; most of the new councilors and representatives came from one area, just like the old ones. "Pray where is the difference between this establishment and the former one, so much complained of, except that the Governor had the power in the former, and a number of persons in the latter," they asked.50

The authors argued that a permanent government should provide the opportunity for each incorporated town to have one representative, that councilors should be elected at large and represent the people at large, and that the Council should have someone to counsel, a governor. In addition, they argued that creating a permanent government was a right that belonged to the people, not to a small group of representatives.51

Knowing that they would be criticized for questioning the government at a time when there was a need for unity, the authors defended their position by noting that towns had petitioned the Congress, but that the petitions had been dismissed. They further charged
that members of the current House were too biased to fairly consider the petitions. To grant them would be to decrease in their own power.52

The authors invited others who had similar concerns to write to them. The town of Temple and Meshech Weare responded. Neither agreed with sentiments expressed in An Address of the Inhabitants. Temple asserted the temporary nature of the new government, pointing out that the conflict with Great Britain was not over. They encouraged the disaffected towns to stop complaining and to "... try the present Plan for a season, by which we shall be more able to judge or experience the surest test of its advantages or disadvantages, and how to improve it for the better."53

While Meshech Weare agreed with the towns on the importance of representation and the care one ought to take to preserve that right, but he too argued that the new government was a temporary measure designed to be replaced after the war with Great Britain ended. He defended the actions of both the Fourth and Fifth Provincial Congresses and challenged the authors of the pamphlet to prove that some people were by intention denied the right to cast their vote for a representative.54

Weare failed to understand the towns' plea for one representative for each incorporated town. He assumed that the authors meant that each incorporated town should
have only one representative. What the authors actually said was

... we do not deny, but the legislative body may... grant to the large capital towns in the Colony some greater privileges in this respect, [selecting representatives] than the other towns have; but to unite half a dozen or more towns together, equally privileged, in order to make them equal to some one other town, is a new practice in politics.

There is no record that the House of Council discussed An Address of the Inhabitants, and there is no evidence that Weare's response was printed. He may have written as a private individual. Yet on September 13, 1776, the House, claiming that it had been mistaken about the number of voters in the Hanover class, voted to split the towns into two groups. For the 1776 election, writs would be issued to Hanover, Canaan, and Cardigan, and to Lebanon, Relihan, and Grafton. The House further voted that writs would be issued to other towns when their population increased. Had the House taken this measure in December 1775 when the Hanover class protested their grouping, the conflict with the Cheshire and Grafton County towns might have been avoided.

When a new House of Representatives met in December 1776, at least thirty-three Grafton and Cheshire towns whose voters boycotted the elections were unrepresented. Some towns, which had voted for a representative, refused to vote for councilor, leaving Grafton County unrepresented in the Council. Fourteen towns, Hanover,
Canaan, Cardigan, Grantham, Orford, Piermont, Haverhill, Lyman, Bath, Gunthwait, Landaff, Morristown, Lyme, and Acworth, sent statements to the House defending their reasons for non-compliance with the election writs. In their protest, they referred to An Address to the Inhabitants and restated its most salient features—classing towns together for representation, requiring representatives to be worth £200, and restricting the choice of councilors by county.57

More significantly, the protesters elaborated upon an idea that had been merely suggested in An Address to the Inhabitants. The towns noted that the Fourth Provincial Congress had adopted a new plan for representation and the Fifth Provincial Congress had taken up civil government when the colonies and Great Britain were united. With the Declaration of Independence, all the colonies reverted into a state of nature, and the New Hampshire House lost its authority to govern. A new form of government was needed and it could be created only by a full and free representation of the people.58

A disgusted Meshech Weare, acting in his capacity as a member of the Committee of Safety, bundled the protests with a copy of An Address and sent them to Continental Congress delegate, William Whipple. In his accompanying letter, he accused the Dartmouth College faculty of being the force behind the protest. If Weare spoke for the
Committee of Safety and the House, the protesters were correct in their assertion that they would not get a fair hearing by the House of Representatives. Before the House had a chance to review the protest letters, Weare stated his position in his letter to Whipple "... our Government is only temporary & the State of matters [will] not allow a Revisal." 59

Representatives from Marlow, Alstead, Surry, New Ipswich, Walpole, and Chesterfield arrived at the House of Representative in December 1776 with instructions from their towns which supported the protesters’ efforts. Walpole specifically charged its representative to lobby for a special convention, attended by all incorporated towns, to write a new constitution, subject to the review of the people. Delegates from Portsmouth urged the House to examine the conflict and effect a solution. Their instructions read

We desire you would pay a great attention to any Causes of Complaint subsisting in many Towns on the Western part of this State & to quiet any uneasiness which they feel, from Real or supposed Injuries by Partial Representation; these Complaints if they are not seasonable redress’d may ripen into an open disaffection to our Cause, as the right of Taxation wholly depends upon that of Representation & is the Basis of our present Controversy with Britain, & if we withhold this Right from our own Bretheren, by an unequal Classical Representation, we shall split upon the very Rocks we are striving to avoid, we pray you would preserve this Inherent Right to the People Inviolate & sacred as it is their dearest Priviledge - The better to make Representation equal & general
(as the [Continental] Congress recommended) let it be determined what number of Voters shall be intitled to a Representative not exceeding Fifty & that every Town should have as many Members as that number will admit of... 60

Perhaps because the Portsmouth delegates interpreted the Continental Congress's recommendations in the same way as voters in Grafton and Cheshire Counties, the House created a joint committee on December 30, 1775, to study the problem. As a result, Meshech Weare, Benjamin Giles, John Wentworth, Jr. (Dover) and Josiah Bartlett were commissioned to travel to Cheshire and Grafton Counties to meet with representatives of the disaffected towns. The House charged them to to reassure the people that the new government was a temporary measure to meet an emergency situation.

What the House committee did not realize, as they made their travel plans, was that the disaffected towns had elevated their discussions to yet another level and were now discussing among themselves the fundamental principles of government. They expressed their ideas in a new pamphlet, printed at the end of 1775, titled The People the Best Governors: or a Plan of Government Founded on the Just Principles of Natural Freedom. The authors of the pamphlet summarized all of the defects of the government created by the Fifth Provincial Congress, and they collected and made sense of the suggestions that had been made by the towns since December 1775.61
The People the Past Governors has been described as "one of the clearest democratic statements of the times." Its authors advocated a system of checks and balances, argued in favor of having a governor, recommended that the Council be elected by the people at large, and that judges be elected by county.62

The reforms they proposed would have given the people more control over their government. They recommended that the state be divided equally into legislative districts; that each district have one representative, although the House could grant a district additional representatives; and that elections be held annually. To vote a man had to be twenty-one and reside in an area for a year. There would be no property qualifications for office holders, but no man could hold more than one office at a time. The towns would base their discussions with the House's committee on the principles outlined in the pamphlet.63

The committee's journey took a month. It apparently held large meetings in Keene, Walpole, and Lebanon, although records of the Keene and Walpole meetings have not survived. The meeting in Lebanon, which was coordinated by the United Committees, took place on February, 13, 1777. At the meeting Weare, Giles, Wentworth, and Bartlett defended the House's point of view and urged the towns to accept the current situation until the end of the war.64
The Grafton County towns repeated their position on the necessity of a new government, presented their plan for a Constitutional Convention which could be called without the disrupting the present House, and were ready to discuss specific principles of government as outlined in *The People the Best Governors*. The towns soon realized that the House committee was authorized only to listen, not to act. The following day, the towns met by themselves. They voted that they could not "... acquiesce with the Plan of Representation and proceeding of the present Assembly of this State respecting Government. . . ." At the same time, they assured the House's committee that they supported the Continental Congress and the United States in the struggle with Great Britain.65

The House committee did convince some towns to compromise. Charlestown and the classed towns of Fitzwilliam and Surrey; and Plymouth, New Chester, Cockermouth, and Alexandria sent representatives to the March 1777 session of the house.66

Orford's delegate to the meeting at Lebanon, Israel Morey, came away convinced that a compromise was necessary. For his outspokenness, the United Committees chastised him in a letter to his town and asked that the town choose another man to represent it on the committee. Morey, however, convinced his town of the need for a compromise. In March 1777, Orford instructed
Morey to ask the United Committees to propose a compromise settlement to the House of Representatives on the basis that they [the House] issue writs as soon as the public calamities will admit for a full and free representation, each town to send as many Representatives as they may think proper, which Convention Shall agree on a mode of future Representation, and form a plan of government. 57

Three months later, the United Committees voted to present a compromise plan to the House based on three points: that every town can elect one representative to the General Assembly, that the capital be moved to the middle of the state, and that a separate constitutional convention be called to establish a permanent plan of government. Because of the efforts to stop General Burgoyne's invasion from Canada, the towns did not deliver the petition until November. The House charged a joint committee, consisting of Josiah Bartlett, John Langdon, Benjamin Giles, Ebenezer Thompson, and George King, to draft an answer. The committee replied that nothing could be done until the war with Britain ended. 68

Rejected by the New Hampshire General Assembly, the towns felt that they had no choice but to look elsewhere for a government more sympathetic to their needs. They decided to join the with towns on the west side of the Connecticut River to petition the Continental Congress for permission to form the new state of Vermont. Those in charge of the petition drive promised to submit the
proposed constitution to all towns for suggestions and ratification. For over a year, the towns in Grafton and Cheshire Counties had been trying to persuade the New Hampshire General Court that this was the proper way to create a government.69

The Grafton and Cheshire Counties protest was the culmination of the political awakening in New Hampshire which began with the creation of the first Committee of Correspondence in 1773. In three and one half years some towns had moved from questioning the authority of Parliament to proposing an entirely new form of government based on the belief that the people are the best governors and incorporating some of the most advanced political concepts of the era.

The Grafton and Cheshire County towns, however, were ahead of their time. The majority of the people in New Hampshire were not ready for their ideas. By choosing to work outside of the system, rather than working from within, the protesting towns may have been partially responsible for the failure of their own program. They assumed that they could not change the minds of the members of the House of Representatives.

An examination of town and individual petitions sent to their revolutionary government illustrates that the first House of Representatives was committed to providing for defense and maintaining peace and good order. However, it wanted to carry out those functions without
altering the traditional power structure of the old royal government. It clearly rejected any petitions designed to give new towns and previously unrepresented peoples and equal share in the decision making process. Strange then, that a modern historian has lauded this First New Hampshire House as an institution where now "all had equal opportunity based on personal initiative."
Chapter Notes


6. Ibid., pp. 399-402; NHSP, 8:4, 31, 111.

7. NHSP, 8:312. In the index to volume eight of NHSP, information on Clough is listed under Clifford.

8. NHSP, 8:312.
9. Ibid., 13:459, 461-462. Parker's receipt was

Take of conspiracy and the root of pride three
handfuls two of ambition and vain glory, pound them
in the mortar of faction and discord, boil it in 2
quarts of dissembling tears and a little New England
Rum over the fire of Sedition till you find the scum
of folly wood to rise on the top, then strain it
through the cloths of Rebellion, put it into the
bottle of envy, stop it with the cork of malice, then
make it into pills called Conspiracy of which take
nine when going to bed say over your hypocritical
prayer, and curse your honest neighbor in your bed
chamber and then go to sleep if you can, it will have
so good an effect that all the next day you will be
thinking how to cogzen cheat lie and get drunk abuse
the ministers of the Gospel, cut the throats of all
honest men and plunder the Nation.

10. Ibid., 13:460-461.

11. Ibid., 8:347, 515; "Records of the N.H. Committee of
Safety," p. 70.

12. NHSP, 8:98-99; Henry H. Metcalf, Laws of New


14. Charles Henry Chandler, The History of New Ipswich,
New Hampshire, 1735-1914, with Genealogical Records of
the Principal Families (Fitchburg, Mass., 1914), p. 83;
the expected profit rate of 30 percent was taken from a
Petition from the Merrimack River Towns to the New
Hampshire General Court, February 29, 1776, Box 653043,
NHA.


16. Josiah Brown to General John Sullivan, September 16,
1776, in Otis Hammond, ed., Letters and Papers of Major-
88-89.
17. NHSP, 7:606-607.


19. Petition from the Merrimack River Towns to the New Hampshire General Court, February 29, 1776, Box 659043, NHA.


21. Petitions to the New Hampshire General Court from Exeter, July 5, 7, 9, 1776, Box 659043, NHA.


23. Petition to the New Hampshire General Court from New Hampshire and Massachusetts Towns, November 26, 1775, Box 659044, NHA.

24. NHSP, 8:454, 455, 456; Metcalf, Laws, 4:78-82.

25. NHSP 8:115-117 (quotation from 117); Metcalf, Laws, 4:20.

26. Walpole Committee of Safety to the New Hampshire General Court, August 6, 1776, NHSP, 13:598-599.

27. Claremont Committee of Safety to the New Hampshire General Court, December 9, 1776, Ibid., 11:355-356; Metcalf, Laws, 4:71-76.


30. Evidence exists that some towns voted not to attend the Fifth Provincial Congress because they did not agree with its proposed actions. See Hauke Town Records, vol. 1, p. 95. NWSL; Nottingham Town Records, vol. 4, p. 132.
NHSL: New Boston Town Records, vol. 1, p. 60, NHSL; Warner Town Records, vol. 1, p. 22, NHSL; Lyndeborough Town Records, vol. 2, p. 313, NHSL; for the Hanover class, see NHSP, 8:666. Other towns did not attend or arrived late. Madbury objected to the expense associated with being represented and voted not to participate. See Madbury Town Records, Box 881021, NHA.

31. NHSP, 8:66.

32. New Hampshire Gazette, January 9, 1776. See also NHSP, 8:23.

33. Ibid., NHSP, 8:26-27.


35. William Whipple to his mother, October 7, 1775, Langdon/Elwyn Family Papers, 1717-1841, Box 4, Folder 1, Concord, N.H., New Hampshire Historical Society (hereafter cited as NHHS).

36. NHSP, 8:14-15.


38. NHSP, 8:33-34, 65-67.


40. Josiah Bartlett to John Langdon, March 5, 1776, Ibid., pp. 50-51.

42. Josiah Bartlett to Nathaniel Folsom, June 6, 1776, to John Langdon, June 10, 1776, Ibid., pp. 69, 71; NHSP, 8:150


44. NHSP 7:693-694; Petition to the New Hampshire Congress from New Ipswich, Rindge, Fitzwilliam, and Jaffrey, December 19, 1775, Rindge Town Papers, Uncataloged, NHA.

45. Ibid.

46. NHSP, 8:131.

47. Ibid., 7:696; Election Writ to Hanover, dated November 14, 1775, but altered, General Court Records, Provincial Congress, Record Group III, Box 1, Folder 13, NHA. Wheelock’s petition has not been found.

48. The only letter I could find was a portion of one to Chesterfield. See Chesterfield Town Papers, Box 874:21, NHA.


In the December 3, 1776, issue of the Exeter New Hampshire Gazette, the publisher defended his action in refusing to print An Address of the Inhabitants. He claimed that he had arranged to print the material because he was told it did not contain “anything respecting the present Grand Dispute.” When he read it, he felt that it threatened independence and he asked some members of the General Court for advice. Subsequently he decided not to print the piece.

50. An Address of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Plainfield, Lebanon, Ralhan, Cannan, Cardigan, Hanover, Lime, Orford, Haverhill, Bath, and Landaff, to the Inhabitants of the Several Towns in the Colony of New-
Hampshire, NHSP, 10:233.

51. Ibid., 10:229-235.

52. Ibid., 10:229-230, 234-235.


54. See "I lately met with a Pamphlet...," Weare Papers, Executive Records, Record Group I, Box 19, Folder 107, NHA.

55. NHSP, 10:231.

56. Ibid., 8:340, 344.

57. See NHSP, 8:421 for Hanover, Canaan, Cardigan; 8:422-423 for Lyme; 8:423 for Acworth; 10:240-241 for Haverhill, Lyman, Bath, Gunthwait, Landaff, Morristown; 12:57 for Grantham. See also Orford Town Records, vol. 1, p. 284, NHSL; Piermont petition, Executive Records, Correspondence and Messages, Record Group I, Box 11, Folder 1, NHA.

58. Inhabitants of the Towns of Haverhill, Lyman, Bath, Gunthwait, Landaff and Morristown [to the New Hampshire General Court], December 13, 1776, NHSP, 8:425.

59. Ibid., 8:420.


1957), 321-341, (quotation from p. 333).

63. Chase, Dartmouth, pp. 559, 660-661, 662.

64. Evidence for a meeting at Walpole comes from Acworth Town Records, vol. 1, 38-39, NHSL; for Keere from Letter to the Committee of the General Court from Chesterfield, Petitions, Record Group III, Box 3, Folder 23, NHA. See also Josiah Bartlett to William Whipple, March 1, 1777 in Mevers, The Papers of Josiah Bartlett, p. 38. Bartlett writes that he has just returned from Grafton County as part of the committee and that the trip took a month. The committee must have had more than one destination. It would not take a month to travel to Lebanon for a two day meeting.

65. United Committees to the Assembly’s Committee, February 14, 1777, Executive Records, Correspondence and Messages, Record Group I, Box 11, Folder 2, NHA.

66. NHSP, 8:503.

67. United Committees to Orford, February 14, 1777. Executive Records, Correspondence and Messages, Record Group I, Box 11, Folder 2, NHA.


69. See volume ten of NHSP for a record of the attempts of New Hampshire towns to join Vermont.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENTS: FAMILIAR PATTERNS CONTINUE

In 1776, the New Hampshire towns that eventually voted to join Vermont chose to work outside of the legislative system to pressure the first House of Representatives to change its composition and structure. These towns assumed that because of their opposition to the new plan for representation and the way the Fifth Provincial Congress had interpreted the recommendations of the Continental Congress, their delegates could not rise to a position within the House from which they could influence the members to make the changes they considered essential for representative government.

The towns based their assumptions on their analysis of the way political power was distributed in both the General Assemblies and the Provincial Congresses. It appeared to them that the system was inherently biased towards representatives from the older, more populated towns, and that the members of the first House of Representatives intended to keep it that way. The House's rejection of the proposals contained in An Address of the Inhabitants and The People the Best
Governors reinforced their beliefs. To the people of Grafton and Cheshire Counties, the Declaration of Independence resulted in no real change in New Hampshire. One oppressive government was replaced by another.

Jackson T. Main and James K. Martin have challenged the perceptions of the pamphleteers from Cheshire and Grafton Counties. Main, who analyzed the Provincial Congresses and the first House of Representatives as institutions, and Martin, who analyzed the personal and professional characteristics of specific men, both agreed that political power was more equally distributed in the province's revolutionary legislatures than it had been in royal institutions. They concluded that a democratic revolution had occurred in New Hampshire.¹

Main focused on the Fourth Provincial Congress. He called the group an "agrarian democracy," and argued that this trend frightened unnamed "... provincial leaders... [who] either drew back in alarm or tried as quickly as possible to organize a regular, less popular government." The conservative reaction resulted in the new plan for representation that limited the number of delegates to the Fifth Provincial Congress.²

Martin concentrated on the changes resulting from the Interim Constitution of 1776. Because it had a House and a Council, the new government looked very similar to the old General Assembly; however, there were striking
differences. Elections were held annually, making representatives more accountable to their constituencies. The 1775 plan for representation, which was incorporated into the Constitution, divided towns into the equivalent of election districts, allowing all voters an opportunity to participate in the election process. As a result the first House of Representatives had more members than the former royal Assemblies, and they represented towns in all parts of the state. The result of this change, according to Martin and Main, was that political power moved out of the hands of men who represented the Piscataqua area into the hands of those who represented the western part of the state.\(^3\)

Both Martin and Main based their claims for the democratic nature of the Revolution in New Hampshire on the changes in the structure of the government that gave more men the opportunity to participate in the election process. Neither analyzed the changes, if any, in the composition of the group who controlled the decision-making process in the Assemblies, the Congresses, and the House of Representatives. For a true democratic revolution to have occurred, there must have been a change in the structure of government that allowed more men to participate, and a change in the composition of the leadership group that allowed new categories of men the opportunity to make important decisions about government.\(^4\)
The people from Grafton and Cheshire Counties based their perceptions of the Provincial Congresses and the first House of Representatives on their own experiences. Main and Martin used widely accepted historical techniques. The differences in their conclusions about the same groups forces historians to analyze the distribution of political power and the characteristics of leaders in the General Assemblies, the Provincial Congresses, and the First House of Representatives. Such an analysis will enable us to determine more precisely what changes occurred in New Hampshire legislatures in the early years of the Revolution.

One can make comparisons of the distribution of political power among the three groups by examining Gini scores, calculated as a part of the Structural Analysis procedure used to identify legislative leaders. The Gini scores indicate how equally committee assignments were distributed among members of a legislative session. Since most of the important decisions were made by committees, those men who served on committees had a greater opportunity to participate in the decision-making process than those who did not serve on committees.

If Jackson T. Main and James K. Martin were correct in their analysis of the changes in the way political power was distributed, then we would expect the Gini scores for the Assemblies called by the governors to be very high, close to 1.0, indicating that a few men held a
majority of the assignments, and thus controlled the decision-making process of the Assembly. The scores for the Provincial Congresses, on the other hand, will be very low, close to 0.0, indicating that many people shared decision-making power. Those for the first House of Representatives should be higher than those for the Provincial Congresses, but lower than those for the royal Assemblies, indicating that fewer men exercised power in the House than in the Provincial Congresses, but that more men exercised power in the House than in the Assemblies.

Table V presents the Gini scores for legislative sessions convened between 1765 and 1776 and the percentage of leaders in those sessions. The scores show that Martin’s and Main’s theory needs revision. The distribution of political power was opposite of what they concluded. The scores for the Provincial Congresses were high, while those for the General Assemblies and the first House were lower and very similar. The Gini scores showed that men elected to the General Assemblies convened between 1765 and 1771 had more opportunity to participate in the decision-making process by being appointed to committees than men who were elected to any other legislative session in the period. The 1765 through 1771 sessions met for the required three-year period; therefore their scores reflect the normal distribution of power for royal Assemblies. In those
sessions between 27 and 41 percent of the members controlled 75 percent of the committee assignments. The 1774 and 1775 Assemblies were abnormal, meeting only a few months. In a sense, they were single issue Assemblies; Governor Wentworth dissolved the 1774 Assembly in response to the creation of the second Committee of Correspondence and the 1775 Assembly in the dispute over the seating of the delegates from Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme.

### TABLE V

**GINI SCORES FOR LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS BETWEEN 1765 AND 1775**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gini Score</th>
<th># Leaders</th>
<th>% Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 1765</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 1768</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 1771</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 1774</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4, 1775</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Congress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>House</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>0.673</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Gini Scores for the Provincial Congresses indicate that political power was concentrated in the hands of a few, rather than being widely distributed. This was especially true in the Third Provincial Congress in which 7 percent of the delegates controlled 75 percent of the committee assignments. The Fourth Provincial Congress, Main's "agrarian democracy," had a Gini Score of .740, again indicating that relatively few men controlled the majority of the assignments.

In equating a large number of delegates with a redistribution of political power in the Fourth Provincial Congress, Main has made a serious error. He assumed incorrectly that merely by being elected, all representatives had an equal chance to participate in the decision-making process. In actuality, 16 percent of the delegates to the Fourth Provincial Congress received 75 percent of the committee assignments. The perceptions of the people of Grafton and Cheshire Counties were correct. They realized that the majority of the representatives who attended the Fourth Provincial Congress had an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process only when the Speaker created a Committee of the Whole, or when the entire Congress discussed a particular issue, as it did on November 4, 1775, in attempts to develop a plan of representation. The rest of the time, most of the delegates sat.

Contrary to Martin's and Main's conclusions, the
Gini scores indicate that delegates to the first House of Representatives had a greater opportunity to participate in the decision-making process than those who were elected to the Provincial Congresses. In the House, 33 percent of the delegates controlled 75 percent of the committee assignments. Their opportunities were similar to those in Governor John Wentworth’s second Assembly. Again, the assumptions of the pamphleteers from Cheshire and Grafton Counties were correct. There was no significant change in the actual distribution of legislative power between the new government and the old.

In pre-revolutionary America, it was not unusual for a small number of men to control the legislative process. Jack Greene estimated that 17 percent of the men elected to Virginia’s House of Burgesses became leaders, while Robert Zemsky estimated that between 26 and 40 percent of Massachusetts representatives became leaders. In light of the Virginia and Massachusetts studies, a Gini score range of .407 to .906 can be considered extreme, as can the range of active members, from 7 percent to 41 percent.

Considering that political power was distributed less equally at the end of the period than it was at the beginning, another question needs to be answered. Did the characteristics of New Hampshire’s legislators and legislative leaders change from crown to congress to state? If there was indeed a change in the type of men
elected and a change in the type of men who rose to leadership positions, one might be justified in concluding that a democratic revolution had, in fact, taken place in New Hampshire.6

An analysis of certain politically significant characteristics of men elected to the General Assemblies, the Provincial Congresses, and the first House of Representatives indicates that there was no change in these characteristics between 1765 and 1776. When New Hampshire voters went to the polls, they looked for a man in his mid-fourties with recognized status based upon a combination of professional and personal characteristics. (See Table VI).

### TABLE VI

**PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LEGISLATORS ELECTED BETWEEN 1765-1776**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G. Assemblies</th>
<th>Prov. Congresses</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant or Professional</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>44 yrs.</td>
<td>44 yrs.</td>
<td>45 yrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An indication of a man's local status was his election as town selectman or moderator. Men in these offices, like James Knowles of Rochester or Ezekiel Worthen of Kensington, were responsible for the day-to-day functioning of their towns. Their duties, which required the ability to communicate clearly, mediate disputes, and exercise good judgment, prepared them to take a seat in the legislature. Between 73 and 86 percent of the representatives had been selectmen before election, and between 44 to 57 percent had been moderators.  

Voters also looked for a man who had status outside his community. As a result they frequently elected their local Justice of the Peace to represent them. The Governor, with the concurrence of his Council, appointed Justices of the Peace. The office, which was one of the few favors New Hampshire's Royal Governors could dispense, provided the holder with an opportunity to augment his income and increase his status in the larger community. Of the 120 justices in the colony in 1774, 50 percent of them served in a legislative session in that or the following year. Overall, between 19 and 29 percent of the representatives had been Justices of the Peace before election.  

In selecting their representatives, voters also considered a candidate's personal characteristics, particularly those that indicated that a man had
knowledge of and stature in the world outside of the local area. A man who had a college education, was a merchant or a member of one of the professions, or was related to someone in the legislature fit this description. Throughout the entire period 18 to 19 percent of the legislators were men who had graduated from college or had an equivalent educational experience. At a time when only 1 in 200 eligible men had these opportunities, the figure for New Hampshire legislators was 47 of 296, or 1 in 6.3.9

While farmers composed 66 to 75 percent of the eligible voters in New Hampshire, they never composed more than 44 percent of the legislature. When farmers went to the poll, they elected merchants and professional men to represent them. Forty nine to 58 percent of the legislators fell into this group. As a result of their means of making a living, these men traveled, coming in contact with people outside of their local area. These contacts enabled them to exchange views on the current issues of the day. Men who were related to legislators also had a source of information denied many others. This proved to be an advantage in being selected themselves. In the three groups, from 42 to 57 percent of the delegates were related by blood or marriage to someone who had been previously elected.10

This analysis of the pre-election characteristics of men elected to the General Assemblies, the Provincial
Congresses, and the First House of Representatives, suggests that Main's and Martin's conclusions need revising. In spite of a more open election procedure, the voters' mental image of what constituted a "proper" representative did not change. They continued to elect the same type of men.

Status on the local level, however, did not guarantee that a man would be recognized by his colleagues in the legislature as a leader on the provincial level. When a representative traveled to Portsmouth or Exeter to take his seat, he carried with him the characteristics of the town he represented. In the struggle for political power within the legislature, those characteristics could be significant factors, as could the experience a man gained while a member of the legislature.

Both Jack Greene and Robert Zemsky analyzed leadership characteristics as part of their larger works. In colonial Virginia, legislative leaders served a period of apprenticeship in the Assembly before advancing to leadership. In Massachusetts, experience in the legislature was not a relevant factor. The Massachusetts Assembly drew its leaders from delegates who had a college education, had previous judicial experience, and represented an Eastern shore constituency. Martin and Main concluded that, as in Massachusetts, the New Hampshire legislature separated
leaders from non-leaders on the basis of characteristics that delegates brought with them to the legislature, rather than on the basis of characteristics they acquired after election.11

An analysis of the characteristics of the New Hampshire legislators between 1765 and 1776 indicates that the leadership profile in the New Hampshire legislatures was similar to that in the Assemblies of both Virginia and Massachusetts. Some men became leaders as a result of characteristics they had acquired before they were elected, while others became leaders as a result of the experience they had gained within the legislature. In addition, the characteristics which separated leaders from non-leaders in the General Assemblies remained essentially the same in the Provincial Congresses. Leaders in the first House of Representatives had the same characteristics as leaders in the other two groups, but because the House was a more homogeneous body, the differences were not as dramatic.

Twenty-five men composed the leadership structure of the General Assemblies. By definition, they were the men who controlled 75 percent of the assignments. Fifty-six percent of the leaders, like those in Virginia, were distinguished from their peers on the basis of the experience they gained in the Assembly, as well as on their pre-election characteristics. The Assembly’s preference for experienced men, however, did not prevent
eight first term assemblymen from climbing to the top in their first session. These men, like those in Massachusetts, were separated from their peers solely on the basis of the characteristics they brought with them to the Assembly. (See Table VII).12

### TABLE VII

**LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN ELECTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BETWEEN 1765 AND 1776**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Assembly Members</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 73</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant or professional</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town social scale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 through 10</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 through 10</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*calculated only for leaders.

While only 18 percent of the Assembly’s members had a college education or its equivalent, 40 percent of the leaders fell into this group. A college degree, not only gave a man educational advantages, but also provided an indelible mark of social status. At Harvard, the college of almost all New Hampshire legislators, incoming students in each class, until the class of 1772, were ranked according to their family’s status. The rank,
which determined a student's position at school, was carried by the student into the next generation.\textsuperscript{13}

All of the college-educated men were either merchants or members of the professions. This group composed 58 percent of the Assembly and 88 percent of the leadership group. Men who had achieved status at the local level as a result of their education and occupation found their skills in demand in the Assembly. As relations with Britain became tense, merchants like Jacob Sheafe and John Sherburne led the fight against Parliament's attempts to tax the colonies, and lawyers like Woodbury Langdon wrote the brief defending the Assembly's right to determine its own membership.

As expected, as a result of research on the New Hampshire Council, family ties were important in determining a man's rise to a position of leadership. A man who had a relative in the Assembly had someone to whom he could turn for advice, someone to introduce him to people who could help him advance his career. If the relative was no longer in the Assembly, the neophyte legislator still benefited from name recognition and the reputation of his predecessor. Fifty-seven percent of the members of the Assembly were related to someone who was elected prior to their election; among the leadership group, 70 percent were so related.\textsuperscript{14}

Town characteristics were significant in separating leaders from non-leaders in the Assembly. Towns that
were more socially developed provided their residents more opportunities to receive information about the outside world. An indication of a town’s social development were institutions, organizations, or types of people located within a town that could serve as a conduit for the exchange of ideas. Men who came from towns that had a newspaper, were the seat of county government, or had a long history of representation in the Assembly were better able to understand the significance of colony-wide issues.

To compare a town’s social development, I constructed a scale for each town by counting the number of local institutions, organizations, or groups of people that potentially provided men an opportunity to give and receive information about the outside world. The maximum points a town could accrue was ten, with a point awarded for items like a newspaper, a minister, a representative. The higher a town’s score, the more opportunity local people had to exchange information.15

While 55 percent of the representatives came from towns that ranked five through 10 on the social scale, 64 percent of the leaders came from those towns. More significantly, 40 percent of the leaders came from towns that ranked seven through ten. Only 17 percent of the delegates came from this group. The members of the Assembly clearly desired leaders who had the opportunity to learn about colony-wide issues before their election.
While it appeared that the Assembly had rigid criteria for selecting its leaders, there was room at the top not only for men like Portsmouth's John Sherburne who was born with the proverbial "silver spoon" in his mouth, but also for men like Durham's Ebenezer Thompson, who started his legislative career as a backbencher. Nine years later, Thompson was a major Assembly leader.

Both Sherburne and Thompson began their Assembly careers in 1766. As a member of the Portsmouth Fire Society, Sherburne was exempted from town offices. He was first elected to the Assembly to replace his brother, Henry, who was elevated to the Council. Sherburne's father, a Harvard graduate, had also been a representative and a councilor. In his first term, Sherburne, a merchant, was appointed to several prestigious committees dealing with the colony's finances and its relationship with its agents in Great Britain. He was on a joint Assembly and Council committee to develop a plan to divide the colony into counties, and he helped plan Governor John Wentworth's welcoming reception. In 1774, Sherburne replaced his recently deceased brother on the Council.

Ebenezer Thompson, a physician, served his town as selectman and clerk, and a larger area as Justice of the Peace. His only connection with the Assembly was through his uncle, Jonathan Thompson, who had also represented Durham. In his first term, Thompson was appointed to three committees to deliver messages, a committee to
draw parish lines in Hampton Falls, and a committee to survey laws and fines in order to devise a way to regularize them. In Governor John Wentworth's final Assembly, Thompson was on the committee to defend the Assembly's refusal to seat the delegates from Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme.17

Thompson's experience in moving from backbencher to leader was typical of the experience of several individuals who served in the Assembly between 1765 and 1776. Far from being a closed system, providing opportunities only to those related to the Governor or councilors, the Assembly evaluated the merits of all its members and advanced to leadership those best qualified to govern.

The profile of the twenty-eight leaders in the Third and Fourth Provincial Congresses was very similar to that of the Assembly. Fifty-seven percent of the leaders had a college education, and 89 percent were merchants or members of the professions. While only 46 percent of the leaders had previous legislative experience, the delegates who advanced to leadership in their first term were well qualified to join the leadership circle. Ninety-three percent were merchants or members of the professions. The lone farmer among the group was related to someone who had previously served. (See Table VIII).18

Town characteristics, however, were more important in the Provincial Congresses than they were in the Assemblies, and they worked in favor of older, more
settled communities. A town's social scale continued to be a significant factor in determining leadership. Fifty-seven percent of the leaders came from towns that ranked five or more on the social scale. Yet only 22 percent of the total delegates came from this group. While only 7 percent of the delegates came from towns that ranked seven through ten, 25 percent of the leaders came from this group. As in the General Assemblies, leaders came from the more cosmopolitan areas of the colony.

TABLE VIII

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN ELECTED TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES, 1775

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Provincial Congress Members</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 211</td>
<td>N = 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant or professional</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town social scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 through 10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 through 10</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town represented in General Assembly</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 33 years</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 - 66 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66+ years</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*calculated only for leaders.
While 51 percent of the delegates came from towns entitled to representation under the Crown, 71 percent of the leaders came from this group. The bias towards men from older towns was reinforced by the fact that 31 percent of the leaders came from towns that had been incorporated for sixty-six or more years. Only 18 percent of the total membership came from towns in this age group. Without fail, those who came from towns that were not entitled to representation under the Crown had other prerequisites for leadership that compensated for the type of town they represented. They were either merchants, ministers, or related to someone who had previously served in the legislature.

The analysis of the leadership characteristics of members of the Third and Fourth Provincial Congresses further underscores the need to re-evaluate Martin's and Main's conclusions. The leaders of the Congresses bore a striking resemblance to those of the General Assemblies. Main was correct in noting that the largest single occupation in the Provincial Congresses was farming, the occupation of 44 percent of its members. Yet, only 10 percent of the farmers achieved leadership status. As in the Assemblies, the leaders of the Provincial Congresses were college-educated merchants or members of the professions. There is little basis for concluding that the Provincial Congresses were "agrarian democracies."
Many of the towns that protested the actions of the first House of Representatives had experience with only the Provincial Congresses. Townsmen looked at the Congresses' leadership pattern, compared the profile with what they knew about leadership in the General Assemblies, and assumed that men from their area would not be able to compete successfully for the power necessary to implement the reforms they advocated. They knew that they had few college-educated professionals or merchants to elect. What was perhaps more frustrating was leadership based upon town age, representation under the crown, and a town's social scale. These were factors beyond a town's control.

The analysis of the characteristics of the thirty-three leaders in House of Representatives indicates that the leadership pattern found in the Assemblies and in the Provincial Congresses prevailed with only slight modifications. Sixty-four percent of the leaders were merchants or members of the professions, and 52 percent were related to someone who had previously served, but only 24 percent had a college education. Significant in determining leadership for the new House of Representatives, but not for the General Assemblies or Provincial Congresses, was appointment before election as a Justice of the Peace; 49 percent of the leaders, compared to 29 percent of the members had appointments. Previous experience continued to be important with 61
percent of the leaders having served in either the General Assemblies or the Provincial Congresses. Like the other two groups, the House preferred to have as leaders men who came from more cosmopolitan areas of the state. Sixty-one percent of the leaders represented towns that ranked five through ten on the social scale, while 40% represented towns that ranked seven through ten. (See Table IX).

### TABLE IX

**LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN ELECTED TO THE FIRST HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1775**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All House Members</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 100</td>
<td>N = 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant or professional</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town social scale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 through 10</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 through 10</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town represented in</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 33 years</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 - 66 years</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66+ years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*calculated only for leaders.*
Both Martin and Main concluded that in the first House of Representatives the center of political power moved away from the seacoast area to the western part of the state. An analysis of the town characteristics for House leaders indicated that those areas that traditionally controlled political power kept it. Seventy percent of the House leaders came from towns entitled to representation under the Crown, 27 percent represented towns that had been incorporated for sixty-six or more years, and 69 percent represented towns in Rockingham or Strafford Counties. Again the pamphleteers from Cheshire and Grafton Counties were correct. As in the General Assemblies, more House leaders came from Rockingham and Strafford Counties.21

The differences between leaders and non-leaders in the first House of Representatives were not as great as the differences in the other groups. When towns in Grafton and Cheshire Counties refused to participate, they pulled from the House those men who tended to be at the bottom of the scale, men who had only a common school education, who were farmers, representing young, less developed towns, whose first legislative experience was in the Provincial Congresses. As a result, they created a rump House whose members were more homogenous than they otherwise would have been. Until 1782, when the disaffected towns returned to the fold, the House essentially represented the interests of Rockingham,
From an analysis of the distribution of political power within and the leadership characteristics of the General Assemblies, the Provincial Congresses, and the first House of Representatives, it is clear that the purported democratic revolution in New Hampshire in 1775 and 1776 did not occur. At the end of the period, representatives had as much opportunity to participate in the decision-making process as they had in the beginning, but not more. Voters did not change their ideas on the type of man they wanted to represent them. From the beginning to the end of the period men were elected who had achieved status in their personal and professional lives. Those who advanced to leadership were those who were college-educated merchants or professionals who represented older, more cosmopolitan towns. There had always been a place in the leadership structure for men with these characteristics.

The people of Grafton and Cheshire Counties were correct in their analysis of the revolutionary legislatures. They recognized, as Martin and Main did not, that regardless of the changes in the structure of government that allowed more men to participate in the process, there was no change in the way political power was distributed or in the nature of those who controlled it. The representatives from the disaffected towns soon realized that they had no chance of penetrating the
leadership structure to implement their reforms. Feeling that they had no other choice, they withdrew from the House, and unsuccessfully lobbied for changes by directly approaching the people through An Address of the Inhabitants and The People the Best Governors.
Chapter Notes


5. See Chapter I for a discussion of the Gini Score.


7. More than 236 men served between 1765 and 1776. I did not attempt to analyze the characteristics of those who attended the first two Provincial Congresses as the delegate lists are incomplete. The analysis ignores the contribution of John Langdon, as most of the time he was in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress, rather than representing Portsmouth in the Provincial Congress. Throughout the period, men who were not members of the
legislature served on legislative committees. These men were also ignored in the analysis.

An obvious personal characteristic is wealth. I was not able to find comparable data for men from different towns. However I did find personal inventories for eleven towns, Bath, Lyme, Conway, Dublin, Piermont, Bedford, Gunthwaite, Kingston, Concord, Hampton Falls, and Hawke. In those towns representatives ranked either in the upper 10 or 20 percent of those listed.

8. I took the number of Justices of the Peace from Nathaniel Mills and John Hicks, Mills and Hicks British and American Register: with an Almanak for the Year 1775, for all the New England Province (Boston, 1774), Evans #13440-13441. Almanacs in the eighteenth century contained lists of province and county offices, plus information about towns, churches, roads, and taverns.


10. Kinship ties may have been greater than I have estimated. I only traced the degree of kinship through first cousins in a man's family and to nephew by marriage in his wife's. Kinship was only recorded for a man who had a relative elected before his election. If two men who were related were elected at the same time, kinship was not recorded.

11. See works cited in footnotes 1 and 6 above.

12. Previous experience was recorded for leaders only. It was therefore not subject to the same analysis as other characteristics.

13. The characteristics listed in Table 3 all had a Chi Square Level of Significance of less than .05. See Clifford K. Shipton, "Ye Mystery of Ye Ages Solved, or, How Placing Worked at Colonial Harvard and Yale," Harvard Alumni Bulletin 57 (1954-1955):258-259, 262-263, for a discussion of ranking at colleges.

14. See works cited in footnote 4 above.
15. See Van Beck Hall, Politics Without Parties: Massachusetts, 1780-1781 (Pittsburgh, 1972) for a discussion of the usefulness of a Social Scale that indicates the opportunities local people had to give and receive information. I awarded one point for participation in the General Assembly, participation in the Provincial Congresses, being a shire town, having one lawyer, having two or more lawyers, having one minister, having two or more ministers, having an inn, college, or newspaper.


17. NHSP, 7:108, 137, 139, 163.

18. The characteristics listed in Table 4 all had a Chi Square Level of Significance of less than .05.

19. Main, in "Government by the People," passim., estimates that between two thirds to one half of the representatives to the New Hampshire Provincial Congresses were farmers. My figure is 44 percent.

20. Only two characteristics in Table 5 had a Chi Square Level of Significance of less than .05. They were Justice of the Peace and Social Scale.

21. Eighty percent of the leaders in the General Assemblies came from Rockingham and Strafford Counties; 62 percent in the Provincial Congresses came from those areas.
CONCLUSION

It is time to create a new mosaic that illustrates the coming of the Revolution in New Hampshire. The focus on the process forces us to look at familiar events in a new way. Far from being in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement because of the attack on Castle William and Mary in December 1774, the Fourth Provincial Congress's petition to assume government in September 1775, and the first state constitution in January 1776, New Hampshire residents were slow to become politically aroused, were almost equally divided on what course of action to follow, and feared the disruption to peace and good order that change could bring. New Hampshire's revolutionary leaders reluctantly assumed the responsibilities of government and they created a new government that, except for the lack of a governor, was nearly indistinguishable from the old. In the process they crushed proposals that might have resulted in an egalitarian government in New Hampshire.

The most significant event in the political awakening of New Hampshire townsmen was not the attack on the fort, but the creation of the first provincial Committee of Correspondence approximately a year and a
half earlier. That committee, which spawned local committees, fostered communication among New Hampshire towns and between New Hampshire and other colonies. Its successor, the second Committee of Correspondence, educated New Hampshire citizens to the threat to their rights by Parliament's actions, ensured the colony's participation in the Continental Congresses, and encouraged towns to participate in collective activities designed to aid Boston and pressure Parliament for changes in its policy.

The collective actions and arguments surrounding the Tea Act caused men to apply to themselves the arguments of "no taxation without representation." Many towns began to examine the situation in their own colony and in 1774 petitioned the Governor to change the system of representation. Their petitions fell on deaf ears. Governor Wentworth issued no new election writs.

Still not all were convinced. Prominent men like Portsmouth's Woodbury Langdon in the General Assembly and Hampton Falls's Paine Wingate in the Provincial Congresses argued for a reconciliation with Great Britain, for compromise, for the status quo. Their arguments found ready listeners among those who feared a disruption to society from mob actions seemingly associated with the preservation of rights. The tug between rights and law and order continued until August 1775 when Governor Wentworth left the colony. He decided
for towns that they would have a revolutionary government.

When Governor Wentworth left, the Fourth Provincial Congress, which until that time had been primarily concerned with the defense of the colony, reluctantly assumed responsibility for preserving law order in the province. But it was uncomfortable with its role. As it had in matters of defense, it appealed to the Continental Congress for advice and permission to formally assume the nature of a government. In the election warrant for the Fifth Provincial Congress, it appealed to the towns for permission to implement the recommendations of the Continental Congress.

The First House of Representatives, created out of the Fifth Provincial Congress, demonstrated its commitment to providing for defense and preserving law and order by responding to pressure from the towns to solve local problems. It was not responsive, however, to town petitions which challenged the plan of representation or the decision to assume government. Such petitions were callously dismissed.

By January 1776 the appearance of the government had changed, yet there was no change in its internal structure. The same type of men who exercised political power at the beginning of the period, exercised power at the end. The conservative nature of the leaders of the Fourth Provincial Congress and the First House of
Representatives drove from the legislature representatives from Grafton and Cheshire Counties who wanted to give men more control over their government. Unsuccessfully they used political pamphlets to lobby for reforms.

The new mosaic depicts a colony that became concerned with the preservation of its rights earlier than previously estimated, but it did so hesitantly and gradually. Its leaders reluctantly assumed power, but effectively used that power to crush proposals that would have given people more control over their government.
APPENDICES
# Appendix A

**First Provincial Congress**  
**July 21, 1744**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Delegate(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>Paul Dudley Sargent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkinson</td>
<td>Nathaniel Peabody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrington</td>
<td>John Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boscawen</td>
<td>Henry Gerrish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candia</td>
<td>Abrahan Fitts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>Ezekiel Morrill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>John Webster, Robert Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>Timothy Walker, Jr.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>Nathaniel Cooper, Stephen Evans, Caleb Hodgdon, John Waldron, Joshua Wingate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunstable (Nashua)</td>
<td>Jonathon Lovewall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>John Sullivan, Ebenezer Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kingston</td>
<td>Ebenezer Bachelor, Jacob Gale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>Abraham Perkins, Nehemiah Wheeler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>Nathaniel Folsom, John Giddinge, Samuel Gilman, Theopolis Gilman, John Phillips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>Clement March, William Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>Jonathan Moulton, Josiah Moulton, Josiah Moulton, III, Christopher Toppan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Falls</td>
<td>Meshech Wears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawk (Danville)</td>
<td>Thomas St. Ranney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollis</td>
<td>John Hale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkinton</td>
<td>Jonathan Straw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkinton</td>
<td>Voted not to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington</td>
<td>Josiah Bartlett, Jacob Hook, Benjamin Stevens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Ebenezer Jones, Joseph Sias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndeborough</td>
<td>Ephraim Putnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madbury</td>
<td>John Wingate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>Amos Dakin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrimack</td>
<td>John Chamberlain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newington</td>
<td>Richard Downing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>Walter Bryant, Israel Gilman, Thomas Tash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>Stephen Bartlett, Abraham Kimball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>Abel Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplin (Fremont)</td>
<td>Zaccheus Clough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>Supply Clapp, Samuel Cutts, Samuel Hale, John Langdon, Woodbury Langdon, John Pickering, Jacob Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>John Dudley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>James Knowles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>Samuel Jenness, Samuel Knowles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandown</td>
<td>Samuel Sleeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td>Henry Robie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somersworth</td>
<td>Ichabod Rollins, John Wentworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hampton</td>
<td>Philips White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratham</td>
<td>Stephen Boardman, Simeon Wiggin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>Samuel Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilton</td>
<td>Jacob Abbot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Could not be verified in Concord Town Records.*
Appendix B

Second Provincial Congress
January 25, 1775

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Delegate(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>Paul Dudley Sargent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkinson</td>
<td>Thomas Noyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nathaniel Peabody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrington</td>
<td>John Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>James Marten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boscauen</td>
<td>Henry Gerrish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Voted not to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brentwood</td>
<td>Samuel Dudley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Peabody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elisha Sandborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candia</td>
<td>Moses Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>Samuel Ames</td>
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<td>Robert Wilson</td>
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Chichester

Concord

Dearfield

Derryfield

Dover

Dunstable (Nashua)

Durham

Epping

Epsom

Exeter

Greenland

Hampton

Elijah Ring

Timothy Walker, Jr. *

Moses Marshall
Daniel Moore

Voted not to participate.

Nathaniel Cooper
Stephen Evans
Caleb Hodgdon
John Waldron, III
Joshua Wingate

Joseph Ayers
Robert Fletcher
Jonathan Lovewell

John Sullivan
Ebenezer Thompson

Enoch Coffin
Seth Fogg
David Lawrence
James Norris
Abraham Perkins

Andrew McClary
John McClary

Nathaniel Folsom
John Giddings
Nicholas Gilman
Theopolis Gilman
William Parker

Nathan Johnson
Clement March
William Weeks **

Amos Coffin
Anthony Emery
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<td>Jonathan Moulton</td>
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<td>Jonathan Burnam</td>
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Raymond
John Dudley
Jonathan Swaine

Rindge
Enoch Hale

Rochester
James Knowles
Ebenezer Tebbetts

Salisbury
Leonard Judkins

Sanbornton
Rev. Joseph Woodman

Sandown
Robert Collins
Moses Hook
Samuel Sanborn

Seabrook
Winthrop Gove
Benjamin Leavitt
Henry Robie
Richard Smith

Somersworth
Ichabod Rollins
John Wentworth

South Hampton
Abel Brown
Eliphalet Merrill
Philips White

Stratham
Stephen Boardman
Stephen Peiper (Piper)
Simeon Wiggin

Temple
Francis Blood

Wilton
Jacob Abbot

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Record Group II-Executive Council Records.
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Record Group IV-Secretary of State Records.
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