



Volume 20

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America's Revolution (75) – Committees of Correspondence – II

Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.

Intro: *A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts*

Content: When word emerged from the committee investigating the seizure and destruction of HMS *Gaspee*, a British Navy customs schooner in Rhode Island waters in

1773, that henceforth prisoners and witnesses would be taken to London for any trial, colonial newspapers began to openly speculate on the imminent future of American independence. The fact that contrary to ancient English tradition that one had to be tried by one's peers was now being openly ignored by the Royal government, set colonial teeth on edge.

In Virginia, this departure from tradition united the leadership of the Commonwealth in an effort to bring the various colonies together in mutual support. Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Richard Henry Lee and following them the House of Burgesses established a permanent or standing committee to maintain communication with the other colonies. The example of Virginia's leadership began to spread and stimulated similar efforts in all but one other colony. This put in place a

system of consultation that would eventually bring the colonies together in two Continental Congresses which would act on independence. The committees of correspondence represented a growing conviction that Americans had more in common than theretofore realized and were increasingly were prepared to act on it.

At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.

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