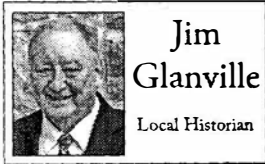


# A Marker for the Fort Gower Resolutions



**Jim Glanville**  
Local Historian

This columnist published a well-referenced article titled

of the Ohio and Hocking Rivers in present-day Hockingport in Athens County, Ohio. It is about fifteen miles southwest of Parkersburg, West Virginia. The fort was a staging post for Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore's army that in 1774 marched into central Ohio to force a peace treaty on the Ohio Indians.

A decade after my article was published, the Southeast Ohio History Center ([athenshistory.org](http://athenshistory.org)) has finally created a historic marker for Fort Gower that is scheduled to be dedicated in Hockingport on November 10, 2019. The marker was delivered to Athens about two weeks ago and the accompanying picture shows the marker still in

ted "Fort Gower: Forgotten Shrine of Virginia History" in the 2010 volume of the "Augusta Historical Bulletin." That shrine is slowly getting better known.

The site of Fort Gower is located on the point of land formed by the confluence

its packing crate.

November 10 will be the approximately 245th anniversary of the signing of the Fort Gower Resolutions at a meeting held there on November 5, 1774, by the officers of Dunmore's army. The Resolutions were a powerful declaration of American rights. In their preamble, the officers boasted that Virginia soldiers could "march and shoot with any in the known World," and would do so for the "Honour and Advantage of America." Thereby they expressed their willingness to fight the King. Their two resolutions were printed in *Williamsburg in the Virginia Gazette* on December 22, 1774, and were widely reprinted.

The first resolution offered "faithful Allegiance to his Majesty King George III" but resolved "that we will exert every Power within us for the Defence of American Liberty, and for the Support of her just Rights and Privileges, not in any precipitate, riotous, or tumultuous Manner, but when regularly called forth by the unanimous Voice of our Countrymen." The second resolution simply offered "the greatest Respect for his Excellency the Right Honourable Lord Dunmore, who commanded the Expedition against the Shawanese; and who, we are confident, underwent the great Fatigue of this singular Campaign from no other Motive than the true Interest of this Country."

Daniel Morgan, "the rifleman of the Revolution" wrote: "After we had beat [the Indians] and reduced them to order and were on our way home, we heard, at the mouth of the Hocking, on the Ohio, that hostilities were offered to our brethren, the people of Boston. We as an army immediately formed ourselves into a society, pledging our honors to assist the Bostonians, in case of a serious breach, which did make place on the 19th of the following April at Lexington [the shot heard round the world at the bridge in Concord]."

The Richmond historian

the late Harry Ward wrote that the Resolutions are a document that "exudes the officers' confidence in their military ability and their sense of fraternal pride. It expresses unstinted patriotism, which was intended to counter apprehensions of the dangers of calling forth a strong regular army."

In addition to their American publication, the Resolutions were read, only four months after their adoption on the Ohio frontier, as a warning in the House of Lords in London by the Marquis of Rockingham during a parliamentary debate in March 1775. Unfortunately, by that time the coming American Revolution was inevitable.

William Christian, whose home place is now underwater beneath Claytor Lake, was at Fort Gower but did not stay for the signing of the Resolutions. We know this because William Russell says so in a letter to William Preston at Smithfield Plantation in modern-day Blacksburg in which: "I [Russell] have Inclosed for your satisfaction, an Address of the Officers with my Ld. [Dunmore] considering the grievances of British America, which I shall be glad you would send to Colo. Christian."

In his fine 2017 biog-

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raphy of Patrick Henry ("Patrick Henry: Champion of Liberty," Simon and Schuster, 2017) historian Jon Kukla devotes a chapter titled "Liberty of Death" to the Second Virginia Convention and the events of that convention and Henry's breathtaking oratory.

On the opening page of that chapter (page 165) Kukla notes that by Monday March 20, 1775, Patrick Henry and ninety-four other delegates from Virginia's sixty-five counties and from Jamestown, Norfolk, and Williamsburg had arrived. Two days later, 119 members of the convention were present, with the last arrival "from distant Berkeley County (now in West Virginia)" being Colonel Adam Stephen, "author of the of the Fort Gower Resolutions, by which the officers

and men fighting in Dunmore's War had endorsed the Continental Association [the first U.S. Congress]."

The Fort Gower Resolutions were strongly influential on four other western Virginia county resolutions that swiftly followed. These were the well-known Fincastle Resolutions and the less well-known resolves made in Augusta, Botetourt and Pittsylvania.

Stay tuned for a forthcoming report about the dedication ceremony in Hockingport.

*Jim Glanville is a retired chemist living in Blacksburg. He has been publishing and lecturing for more than a decade about the history of southwest Virginia. He can be reached at [jglanville@blacksburg.net](mailto:jglanville@blacksburg.net).*

