

**TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE**

**REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
to
THE GOVERNOR
and
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Purchases and Supply
RICHMOND
1965

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TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
REPORT OF
THE VIRGINIA ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Richmond, Virginia, December 13, 1965.

To:

HONORABLE A. S. HARRISON, JR., *Governor of Virginia*

and

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

In the years 1976-81 the United States will reach the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution. Recognizing the primary role which Virginia played in the preliminary debates and in the events of those years, it seemed appropriate to the General Assembly during the Regular Session of 1964 that plans should be made early for the proper celebration of this historic occasion. Accordingly, a resolution was introduced providing for a study by the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council and a report "on the need for creation of a State Commission to plan, execute, and co-ordinate Virginia's observance of this anniversary." The resolution directing the study is as follows:

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Directing the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council to study and report on the need for the creation of a State Commission to plan for Virginia's observance of the two hundredth anniversary of American Independence in nineteen hundred seventy-six.

Whereas, the year nineteen hundred seventy-six will mark the two hundredth anniversary of the climax of the movement to establish American Independence; and

Whereas, each passing day brings home anew to Virginians and all other Americans the blessings brought by American Independence and Freedom; and

Whereas, Virginia had many places and many great statesmen and soldiers associated with this highly important period in our State and National history; and

Whereas, Virginians and all other Americans need to be reminded of and to be inspired by the great events, the great principles of government and the outstanding personalities in this period of history; and

Whereas, Virginia has many historic shrines, dear to the hearts of all Americans, associated with this period in our history, which are visited annually by millions from other states and nations, and which would be visited by additional millions during the observance of this anniversary; and

Whereas, the boards of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Economic Development, the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Travel Council have each endorsed the need for the

State Commission proposed, as has also the Virginia Travel Coordinating Committee which is composed of representatives of each of the three organizations named; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council is directed to study and report on the need for creation of a State Commission to plan, execute and coordinate Virginia's observance of this anniversary.

Among other things, the Council shall consider the number and method of appointment of the Commission members; the type of administrative organization; what appropriation, if any, is needed, and the period of time during which the observance will be held in Virginia.

The Council shall conclude its study and make its report containing its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than April one, nineteen hundred sixty-five.

Pursuant to this resolution, Lewis A. McMurran, Jr., member of the House of Delegates, of Newport News, was chosen by the Council as Chairman of the Committee to make the initial study and report to the Council. The following individuals were selected to serve as members of the Committee with Mr. McMurran: Arthur W. Arundel, Publisher, Arlington; William Gleason Bean, Professor Emeritus of History, Washington and Lee University, Lexington; Samuel M. Bemiss, Industrialist, Richmond; Lloyd C. Bird, member of the Senate of Virginia, Richmond; George M. Cochran, member of the House of Delegates, Staunton; Edwin Cox, Chemist and Chemical Engineer, Aylett; W. C. (Dan) Daniel, member of the House of Delegates, Danville; Mrs. Robert V. H. Duncan, President General, Daughters of American Revolution, Alexandria; Carlisle H. Humelsine, President, Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, Williamsburg; David J. Mays, Attorney, Richmond; Parke S. Rouse, Jr., Executive Director, Jamestown Foundation, Williamsburg and William J. Van Schreeven, State Archivist, Richmond.

The Committee organized and elected Senator Lloyd C. Bird as Vice-Chairman. Dr. Edward M. Riley, Director of Research, Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, Williamsburg, was selected as Special Consultant to the Committee. John B. Boatwright, Jr. and Robert L. Masden were appointed Secretary and Recording Secretary, respectively, to the Committee.

The Committee met on several occasions and considered various means of appropriately commemorating this most significant period of Virginia's and our Nation's history. After due publicity the Committee held a public hearing to receive suggestions and recommendations from all interested individuals, groups and organizations. The Committee carefully considered the suggestions presented to it, and made its report to the Council. The Council has reviewed the Committee's report, and submits its report as follows:

Desirability of Commemoration

We have reached the conclusion that a celebration of the preliminaries and events of the War of American Independence would be valuable as means of acquainting Americans with the sacrifices and accomplishments of Virginia and her people in this period as well as of the benefits derived by the people of these United States.

Period of the Commemoration

We recommend that a Commission be established to commemorate the period, 1974-1983. Additionally, events before this period such as formation of the Association of 1769, and the Committee of Correspondence, and the Convention of August, 1774 and other antecedents should be given due consideration through publication of source materials, or otherwise.

Conduct of the Commemoration

The Council recommends that the General Assembly at its 1966 Session pass legislation creating a Commission to plan and conduct such a commemoration in Virginia, calling upon appropriate State, local and other agencies to participate. It is further suggested that such a Commission should encourage localities in the State to develop suitable local programs.

The Commission

The Commission should be known as The Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission. It is recommended that the Commission be a representative body composed of twenty-five members: four to be appointed from the Senate by the President; eight to be appointed from the House of Delegates by the Speaker; and thirteen to be appointed by the Governor from the State at large. The term of all members would be coincident with the life of the Commission. The Commission should coordinate and encourage the activities of State agencies, patriotic societies, and other interested groups. In particular the Commission should cooperate with any agency of the United States established, and with the commissions established or to be established by other states.

Staff

It is further recommended that for the biennium beginning July 1, 1966, the staff work of the Commission be handled by the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia. At such time as the Commission deems desirable, it should be empowered to create a separate staff.

Appropriations

An initial appropriation of \$150,000 will be desirable for the Commission's anticipated activities during the 1966-68 biennium.

Publications

A program of scholarly publications, including source materials from the public records of Virginia, should be undertaken. These publications, where appropriate, should be made available in popular editions.

War of Independence Records Project

The Council recommends that consideration be given to the establishment of a Virginia War of Independence Records Project similar to the Virginia Colonial Records Project. Because the latter project required a great amount of preliminary planning, it is suggested that surveys be made, particularly in France, to determine the availability and quantity of records pertaining to Virginia and the War of Independence. On the basis of these surveys, the Commission can then determine whether a Virginia War of Independence Records Project might be established.

Physical Improvements

The Commission should cooperate in the development of scenic parkways to promote the preservation and appreciation of Virginia's shrines and historic sites.

Advisory Council

The Council recommends that the Commission be authorized to create an Advisory Council.

The National Commemoration

We urge national consideration of Virginia as the locale of the focal point of the national commemoration of the War of American Independence.

The Commission which we recommend will take proper measures to represent the Commonwealth of Virginia in matters of national and international expositions.

CONCLUSION

The Council recognizes the opportunity presented by the proposed commemoration to capture the interest of young people and urges that the Commission take all proper measures to stimulate this interest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Council desires to record its appreciation to the members of the Committee for their contribution of their time and their interest in the subject under study, and to all the other persons and organizations who assisted the Committee during its study.

A bill to carry out our recommendations is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

EDWARD E. WILLEY, *Chairman*

TOM FROST, *Vice-Chairman*

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A BILL to create a Commission to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of American Independence; to provide for the selection and terms of office of the members of such Commission; to provide for the powers and duties of such Commission; and to appropriate funds for the use of such Commission.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia :

1. § 1. There is hereby created the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "Commission." The Commission shall be composed of twenty-five members who shall be appointed as follows :

(a) Four members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate from the membership thereof ;

(b) Eight members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates from the membership thereof ; and

(c) Thirteen members shall be appointed by the Governor from the State at large.

The members shall be appointed for terms to expire December 31, 1983. Any member may be removed by the appointing authority for cause. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

§ 2. The Commission may appoint honorary members, and may establish an Advisory Council, composed of such persons as it deems especially interested in the commemoration to assist in its work. The Commission shall name seven of its members to constitute an executive Committee, which shall act for the Commission pursuant to its direction.

§ 3. The Commission shall employ an executive director and such other assistants, as it deems appropriate, when they may be required.

§ 4. It shall be the duty of the Commission to develop and coordinate plans of public and private agencies for commemorating the bicentennial of the War of American Independence. All agencies of the State and all political subdivisions are authorized to cooperate with the Commission and to grant funds, property and services to it for the furtherance of the commemoration. In planning and organizing the commemoration, the Commission shall give emphasis to the following :

(a) Significant events preceding the War of American Independence ;

(b) Coordination of its activities with similar activities of other states and the federal government, as well as local, public and private agencies ;

(c) Encouragement and assistance to local governing bodies, patriotic societies, historical societies and other interested groups and organizations in developing commemorative programs ;

(d) Development of a program of scholarly publications, including source materials from the public records of Virginia, which should be published in popular editions, where appropriate and practicable ;

(e) Encouragement, where possible, of the development of scenic parkways to promote the preservation and appreciation of Virginia's shrines and historic sites ;

(f) Promotion of educational activities of interest to young people.

§ 5. With the consent of the Governor first obtained, the Commission may lease or purchase land, property or structures, and may construct buildings deemed necessary for purposes of such commemoration. The title of the property so acquired shall be taken in the name of the Commonwealth.

§ 6. The Commission is authorized to enter into contracts, provided the same have been approved as to form by the Attorney General, and to do all things proper and necessary for the proper commemoration of the events during and immediately preceding the War of American Independence.

§ 7. The Commission is empowered to adopt an official flag, seal and other emblems for such celebration, and to copyright the same in the name of the Commonwealth. With the approval of the Governor, the Commission may lease the right to use such seal and other emblems upon such terms and conditions as to it seems proper.

§ 8. In the lease or sale of any property or right of use, the Commission shall provide that the revenues therefrom shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Commission and they are hereby reappropriated to the Commission for its purposes. The Commission is authorized to accept donations of money, property or personal services; and to cooperate with the United States, other states, patriotic and historical groups, and institutions of learning.

§ 9. The Governor is authorized and requested to issue proclamations inviting the people of the Commonwealth and of these United States and foreign countries to participate in and observe the bicentennial anniversaries of significant historic events, the commemoration of which are provided for herein.

§ 10. The members of the Commission and Advisory Councils shall serve without compensation, but shall receive their necessary expenses incident to the discharge of their duties as provided for herein.

§ 11. A report shall be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly presenting the preliminary plans of the Commission, not later than October one, nineteen hundred sixty-seven. Thereafter, an annual report of the activities of the Commission shall be furnished by the Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly.

2. There is hereby appropriated to the Commission from the General Fund in the State Treasury the sum of \$50,000 for the first year of the biennium beginning July one, nineteen hundred sixty-six, and \$100,000 for the second year of such biennium, for the expenses and operation of the Commission. Any unexpended balance from the first year of the biennium shall be available to the Commission for expenditure during the second year of the biennium.

