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JOHN PAGE OF VIRGINIA

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JOHN PAGE OF VIRGINIA

by

Lee Randolph Harrison

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education at Longwood
College.

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Introduction

Life in eighteenth century America was faced with challenge - either retain a system of government many felt as unfair or throw off the old and tread a new path. In choosing a path for government many momentous tasks had to be untaken and exciting decisions had to be made.

Many of the men who made the new government work were from Virginia. Men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison shaped the future of America. As important as these leaders were to early America, their contributions are only a portion of the story. Behind these leaders were others of less-known fame, but of equal stature in the implementation of the new order. These men have been overshadowed by others of more conspicuous achievements, but their contributions were no less great.

John Page is one of these leaders, a person of prominence and influence in his time, but a little-known figure today. Page's political activities - his intense support of the American Revolution, his service in the first eight years of the Federal Congress, and his governorship of Virginia - are his best known contributions. He was vitally interested in science and religion and made contributions in both fields. Although he was not in the front rank of the leaders of the American Revolution, Page did have the ability and willingness to participate in

the burden of establishing a new nation.

John Page's close personal friendship with Thomas Jefferson is well-known, but it was not a relationship of the great and the small; both men respected each other greatly and relied on the other's opinions. When courting Rebecca Furwell, Jefferson constantly sought the advice of Page. During the early part of 1776, Page wrote Jefferson to urge that the colonies be declared free. In 1780, when Jefferson ran for the governorship, his opponent was Page, but friendship continued. Later when he considered resigning from the governorship, Jefferson wanted Page to replace him, Page pleaded with him to stay in office. When the new government and political parties were formed in 1787, Jefferson became the acknowledged leader of the Republican party. Page was his faithful ally, first on the National level and later on the state level in Virginia. Although a supporter of Jefferson in politics, Page was no puppet. He was an individual of integrity and principle and was respected by Jefferson.

Chapter 1

Early Development

The surname Page is of medieval origin, being the title bestowed upon the servant who stood at the elbow of the Lord.¹ John Page was descended from a family with a tradition of service, and was born into that part of society which, in its day, was in a position to serve both Virginia and the United States.

John Page, the emigrant, (1627 - 1692) came to America from Middlesex, England about 1650, at the end of the English Civil War. Francis Page, the emigrant's father, was a member of the gentry, but little else is known of the status of the Page family in England due to lack of records in Befont Parish, the ancestral home of the family. It is probable that the Page family were Cavaliers and fought for Charles I.² John Page was also called colonel, inferring a military background. After he came to Virginia his position was maintained for he acquired considerable land, and became a member of the House of Burgesses. Later, he was appointed to the Governor's Council.

That John Page, the emigrant, was a religious person as is evidenced by two examples. First, when it was proposed to

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1. Charles Bardsley, English Surnames (Rutland, Vermont 1968), 215.
 2. Richard Channing Moore Page, Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia (New York, 1893), 36 - 38. Thereafter cited as Genealogy.

erect in Williamsburg "a good church to take the place of two indifferent ones in the Parish", John gave ground for the church and graveyard.³ He also gave twenty pounds sterling for the erection of the building. Second, there exists a short book entitled A Deed of Gift to My Dear Son Captain Matthew Page, authored by this first John. The intention of this book was to guide his son, Matthew, "to observe the excellency of scripture (sic) learning."⁴ Presented on New Year's Day 1688, it consisted of fatherly advice, greatly interspersed with quotations from the Old and New Testaments. These actions established a tradition of family service to the established faith in Virginia, first to the Church of England and later to its American offspring, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. Francis, John's other son, helped to enlarge Bruton Parish and a great grandson, John Page, defended the privileges of the Protestant Episcopal Church.⁵

Matthew Page (1659 - 1703), the oldest surviving son of John Page, the emigrant, married Mary Mann, the only child of John and Mary Mann of "Timberneck" in Gloucester County. Like his father, Matthew served in the House of Burgesses and was a member of the Governor's Council. He was also a charter trustee of William and Mary College, to

3. Genealogy, 14.

4. Genealogy, 14.

5. Genealogy, 14.

which his father had given land. Matthew was the first of the family to live on the property that would develop into the family home, "Rosewell," but his son built the mansion.⁶

Mann Page (1691 - 1730), the only surviving child of Matthew and Mary Page, was known as a "patriotic, well-educated, and truly an amiable gentleman."⁷ Being the only child of two prominent families gave Mann I a position of economic and political importance in Virginia. From his mother Mary Mann, "maid of money," he inherited large sums of money and land.⁸ From his father he inherited additional land. His inheritances, combined with patents taken in his own name, made this Page the second largest land owner in the colony.⁹ Mann I further enhanced his economic and political position by marrying Judith Wormeley, the daughter of Ralph Wormeley, Secretary of the Colony, in 1712. When Judith died in 1716, Mann I married Judith Carter, daughter of Robert "King" Carter, the richest planter of Virginia in the eighteenth century. Governor Alexander Spotswood recommended Mann I to be a member of the Governor's Council because he had attained a prominent position in the colony, even greater than his father or his grandfather.

6. Genealogy, 53 - 56

7. John Page, "Memoirs," Virginia Historical Register, Volume III (July, 1850), 142 - 143. Thereafter cited as Page, Register.

8. A Page family saying as expressed by the author's mother, Mrs. Virginia Carter Page Harrison and author's grandmother, Mrs. Richard Channing Moore Page.

9. Margaret V. Smith, Virginia A History of the Executives (Washington, 1893), 306 - 307.

In 1775, desiring a residence comparable with his social standing, Mann I began to build "Rosewell", located at the junction of Carter's Creek and the New York River in Gloucester County. This particular tract, consisting of three thousand acres, came to Mann I through his mother. Mann I spared no expense in the building of "Rosewell", which proved to be a hardship on later generations of the family.¹⁰

"Rosewell" was constructed of brick with white marble casements. The central portion was flanked by two wings which gave a frontage of two hundred thirty-two feet. Externally "Rosewell" was of early Georgian design and quite plain but the interior was an elaborate contrast. The great hall was panelled with polished mahogany and included a beautifully carved staircase which could accommodate comfortably eight persons ascending. The house had fourteen rooms 20' by 20', nine rooms 14' by 7', and nine passageways besides the great hall. The mansion was the most pretentious in the colony. It was three stories above the basement, with foundations three feet thick. On the roof there were to be two observatories which would prove inviting on a hot summer night, but only one was thought to be built. "Rosewell" became the rendezvous of the neighborhood. Mann I died in 1730 before the mansion was finished and task of completing it fell to his oldest son, Mann II. It is not known if Mann II finished "Rosewell" as Mann I envisioned.¹¹

10. Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia 1706 - 1776 (New York, 1945), 111.

11. Alice Cates, "Rosewell", Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, Volume 57 (August, 1923), 452.

Mann II (1718 - ?), the oldest child of Mann I and Judith Carter Page, married first, Alice Grymes, daughter of John Grymes of Middlesex County, in 1743, and second, Ann Corbin Taylor of "Mount Airy," Spottsylvania County. Mann II maintained the family's prominent position in Virginia. From his father he inherited all the family lands in the counties of Prince William, Essex, and Spottsylvania, the latter included the future site of the town of Fredericksburg. Ralph, his half brother, and Carter, his brother, both died without heirs and subsequently all their possessions came to him. He ultimately owned land in Hanover County and all the "Rosewell" estate, which remained in his mother's control until she died.

However, the financial problem of over-extension that would eventually cause the liquidation of the Page holdings surfaced about this time.¹² To meet his financial obligations, Mann II sought permission in September 1744, to sell certain entailed lands to settle his father's debts in both Virginia and Great Britain. Had Mann II been able to sell most of his land and slaves, he still could not have settled these debts. He was forced to pay many of the creditors from his own pocket which caused him a great financial hardship.¹³

Like his father, Mann II was politically prominent in the colony, serving as a member of the House of Burgesses.

12. Genealogy, 58

13. William Hening, Statues at Large, Volume V (Richmond, 1819), 280.

He refused a place on the Governor's Council in favor of his brother John Page of "North End" who he felt was better qualified for the position by "having been brought up in the study of law regularly."¹⁴

Another John Page, subject of this paper, was the first child of Mann II and Alice Page. He was born on April 17, 1743. His mother died when John was three and his paternal grandmother, Judith Carter Page, who was still living at "Rosewell", undertook his upbringing. She exercised a great influence over the young Page who described her as "one of the most sensible and best informed women" he had ever known.¹⁵ She taught him to read and write. She also encouraged him to spend many hours in the "Rosewell" library. In his autobiography, Page wrote:

My grandmother excited in my mind an inquisitiveness which, whenever it was proper, she gratified, and very soon I became so fond of reading, that I read not only all the little amusing and instructing books which she put into my hands, but many out of my father's and grandfather's collection which was no contemptible library.¹⁶

In 1752, when Page was nine, his father sent him to grammar school at the glebe of Ware Parish, Gloucester County, where the Reverend Mr. William Yates, later President of William and Mary College, had undertaken the education of twelve students in the area. Yates was not the most popular teacher, nor did the students appreciate his too frequent

14. Page, Register, 143

15. Page, Register, 144

16. Page, Register, 144

anger. Indeed, Page accused his teacher of having a "passionate disposition."¹⁷ "I had," he wrote, "been totally interrupted in my delightful reading of histories and novels, for twelve months tied down to get by heart an insipid and unintelligible book called Lilly's Grammar, one sentence in which my master never explained."¹⁸ Not only did Page have a dislike for Yates, but apparently the teacher's "passionate disposition" induced Edward Carter, Lewis Willis, Severn Eyre, and Peter and John Whiting to go to William and Mary College before the end of the school year. Thomas Nelson and Robert Tucker, other students, went to England to complete their education. By the end of the year, Yate's school failed and the remaining three students obtained a new teacher.

The following year Mann II and the father of Francis and Lewis Willis procured a private tutor for their sons, one William Price, who continued the education of the students. Whereas Yates only seemed to arouse a dislike in the young Page, Price inspired a warm eagerness to learn in his students, so much that Page was convinced that the once-despised Lilly was a useful book and even an "excellent key to the Latin language."¹⁹ One reason for Price's success may have been his age. At the time of his employment he was only twenty years old. Price's original intention was to enter the ministry, as was his first intention, but accepted the office of

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- 17. Page, Register, 144
 - 18. Page, Register, 145
 - 19. Page, Register, 145

secretary to the Honorable Phillip Ludwell. Ludwell had been deputized by Governor Robert Dinwiddie to meet with the convention of governors, or their deputies, at New York to set mandatory quotas that each colony should furnish to carry on the French and Indian War. According to Page, Price's "mind had been so inflamed by the military ardour that he resolved to abandon the humble employment he was in and fly to the Royal Standard."²⁰ Price, received a Lieutenant's commission and died in the War.²¹

Price was the second great influence on young Page, not only through education in the classical arts but also in contemporary affairs. Page stated that "Mr. Price always read him letters from Captain George Mercer and other fellow collegians who had quitted the academic groves for the fields of Mars with enthusiasm."²² These letters probably stimulated discussions of the French and Indian situation and may have encouraged Price to join the army. Such discussions stimulated Page's interest in military history. These "whiggish principles" Page remembered, "and his inducing me to admire Roman and Grecian heroes and to delight in reading of wars and battles and to inquire on what success of these interesting events turned gave me the colour and complexing to prospects and conduct through life."²³

After Price left in 1756, Page enrolled in the grammar school at the College. He was thirteen. Page's father had

20. Page, Register, 145 - 146.

21. Page, Register, 146

22. Page, Register, 145

23. Page, Register, 146

promised the lad's mother he would be sent to England to be educated, but had changed his mind because several Virginians, among them Page's cousin Robert Carter of "Nomini Hall," had just returned from England" (where supposedly learning alone existed) so inconceivably illiterate, and so corrupted and vicious" that Mann II swore that no son of his would ever go there for an education. 24

The educational system at William and Mary College was similar to that of England. The student was enrolled in grammar school where he studied Latin and Greek for a period of five years or until he was fifteen. During this time he was required to conform to accepted standards of academic behavior, which were "that none of the scholars presume to tell a lie or curse or swear, or talk or do anything obscene or quarrel and fight, or play at cards or dice, or set into drinking, or do anything else contrary to good manners."²⁵ At fifteen the scholar was admitted to the Philosophy School. In this school were two professors, one of whom taught rhetoric, logic, and ethics; the other, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics. When in the Philosophy School the individual was then termed a "student" and wore a cap and gown.²⁶

While at College, John Page lived at the home of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Dawson, who was President of the College from

24. Page, Register, 146.
 25. William and Mary Quarterly Series I Volume XVI (April, 1909) 247. Thereafter cited as Quarterly; 1.
 26. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capital (Richmond, 1907), 267.

1755 to 1761. Dawson, according to Page, "was handsomely fed by his father to be his private tutor."²⁷ Dawson found Page so well versed in Latin that he introduced him to Governor Robert Dinwiddie, a Latin scholar. Page found the Governor to be "an old Scotch gentleman, who was fond of appearing a patron of learning."²⁸

Dr. William Small, newly arrived at William and Mary in 1758, was professor of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics. He introduced a new system of learning to the College, the modern lecture system, which deferred from the memory-lesson system the students had been using. Small remained at William and Mary for six years, and during his tenure he excited the interest of many students, among them were the young Thomas Jefferson and John Page. Many of Small's popular lecture topics dealt with the rights of man, and Page was so impressed that he referred to him as the illustrious professor of mathematics, the darling friend of (Erasmus) Darwin."²⁹

When he first entered William and Mary, Page's intent had been to study military and naval history, an interest derived from his association with William Price, but upon entering the Philosophy School he changed his mind. Page became interested in Natural Philosophy, mechanics, and all branches of mathematics. He credited this change in interest to studying with Thomas Jefferson, Dabney Carr, and John Walker. When

27. Page, Register, 147

28. Page, Register, 147

29. Page, Register, 150. Erasmus Darwin (1731 - 1802) was an English physician, naturalist, and poet. He wrote Zoonomia in which he expressed his ideas on evolution. This included natural selection and the rights of man to make this selection.

the scientifically oriented Governor Francis Faquier arrived in Virginia in 1758, Dr. Small's group gathered at the Governor's Palace to discuss topics of a scientific and philosophical nature.³⁰

All of Page's time in Williamsburg was not devoted to the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. He confessed that he was never able to study as he should since he was "too sociable and fond of the conversation of my friends."³¹ Williamsburg was the center of politics, culture, entertainment, and business in the colony, and Page partook of the social life. Quite naturally at "Publick Times" the social activity of Williamsburg increased, with dances and other social gatherings constantly commanding the attention of a young man. Theatrical companies produced their plays, and there were the races, and cockfights. Taverns always afforded ample reason for a student to abandon his studies.

If these amusements were not enough to occupy one's spare time, the nearby plantations with their lovely young ladies could be visited. Page did not often pass up such opportunities, particularly a chance to visit Anne Randolph of "Wilton" in Henrico County. The time spent with "Nancy" was only a college flirtation, for Page began to court Fanny Burwell, his future wife. Page was accompanied on many of these trips by his classmate, Thomas Jefferson, who used such occasions to visit his beloved "Belinda." There resulted an

30. Page, Register, 147.

31. Page, Register, 150 - 151.

extensive correspondence about the trials and tribulations of their college courtships, and Jefferson and Page remained life-long friends.

Chapter II

The Decisive Years 1765 - 1781

When he had graduated from William and Mary in 1763, Page enlisted in the Virginia Militia with Colonel George Washington on his last westward expedition of the French and Indian War.¹ After his muster out, Page returned to "Rosewell" and in 1765, married Fanny Burwell, the daughter of Robert Carter Burwell from Isle of Wright County. As a wedding gift, Mann II moved to Spottsylvania County leaving "Rosewell" to the newly married couple.² They lived at "Rosewell" until Fanny died in 1787.

Page's marriage to Fanny helped him enter the political arena. Fanny's mother was Sallie Nelson, sister of William and Thomas Nelson of Yorktown. These two gentlemen introduced Page to Lord Botetourt and, after that Governor's death in 1771, to his successor, Governor Dunmore.³ Page's first elected position was that of representative from William and Mary College to the House of Burgesses. He was picked by the President and Professors of the College and served two terms, from 1767 to 1768. In 1768, he was made a member of the Board of Visitors for the College, a position he held for

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1. Richard Channing More Page, Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia (New York, 1893), 75.
 2. Ivor Hume, Here Lies Virginia (New York, 1965), 119. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (Richmond, 1908), Volume 15, 434. Hereafter cited as Virginia Magazine.
 3. John Page, "Memoirs", Virginia Historical Register, Volume III (July, 1850), 147.

nineteen years, when he resigned to serve in the Congress of the United States.⁴

On December 18, 1772, Lord Dunmore wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, recommending John Page for a position on the Governor's Council. John's rival for the job was Johnathon Watson. Watson, an English gentleman, who had resided for some years in the colonies, was a poor choice as he was without connection or influence.⁵ Page was appointed to the position on June 7, 1773, and remained on council until 1775, when the Revolution broke out in Virginia.⁶

Page appeared to be a loyal Councillor until the House of Burgesses adopted on May 24, 1774, Thomas Jefferson's resolution that June 1 be a day of prayer and fasting in observation of the closing of the port of Boston. Lord Dunmore, feeling this resolution an affront to Parliament and King, dissolved the legislature. Eighty-nine Burgesses met at Raleigh Tavern, elected Peyton Randolph presiding officer and proceeded with business. They resolved that one attack on one colony was an attack on all colonies. They also wanted a colonial convention called and instructed the Virginia Committee of Correspondence to forward this resolution. After considerable discussion throughout the colonies, representatives met in Philadelphia in September 1774.⁷ At this time

4. Page, Register, 147.

5. William and Mary Quarterly, Series I, Volume 27 (April, 1909), 133.

6. Quarterly I Volume 2, 37.

7. Virginus Dabney, Virginia: The New Dominion (Garden City, New York, 1971), 121.

Page's "whiggish principles" began to emerge. Page and other members of the Council urged the Governor to summon a new Legislature. Dunmore thought that doing this would only give the House of Burgesses a new opportunity to cause trouble. Page wrote that the "Governor plainly had given us to understand that the King was determined to rule the colonies without their check or control."⁸ Page "adhered to his former whiggish principles, and of course opposed the Tory principles of the Governor."⁹ The argument, however, was between the Council and the Governor and not a personal disagreement between Councillor Page and Governor Dunmore.

The personal conflict between the two arose over the nomination of a new member to the Board of Visitors for the College. John Randolph had been elected to succeed Page as the College's representative in the House of Burgesses; yet in the spring of 1775, when Governor Dunmore nominated Randolph as a visitor, Page opposed Randolph's nomination. Page's opposition was based on Randolph's rejection "on a former occasion as not possessing the disposition and character, moral and religious which the charter and statutes of the college required." Page contended that Randolph "ought not be nominated till it could be proved he had abandoned his former principles, a practice which no one could venture to say he had."¹⁰ Instead of John Randolph, Page proposed

8. Page, Register, 148

9. Page, Register, 149

10. Page, Register, 148

Nathaniel Burwell, a relative, for the position. When the Governor's Council voted, everyone except Governor Dunmore voted for Burwell. Page's role incurred the Governor's displeasure. The Governor never displayed open resentment, but his secretary, Captain Edward Foy, did. Foy made offensive statements to Page's friends, among them James Innes, Usher of College.¹¹ Page felt obliged to call Captain Foy to account for his remarks and Foy made full apologies to Innes and Page.

The final break between Dunmore and Page resulted from Governor's gunpowder theft from the Williamsburg magazine. In October 1774, Lord Dartmouth had informed the colonial governors that no munitions were to be imported into the colonies and that powder and arms in the colonies should be under the direct control of the governor. In compliance with this order, Governor Dunmore sent a detachment of marines, on April 20, 1775, to seize the powder and take it to the schooner Magdalen, anchored at Burwell's Bay on the James River below Williamsburg. When word of this action began to circulate, the citizens were outraged. A group of militia organized by Patrick Henry was marched to within twelve miles of Williamsburg, forcing the governor to pay compensation of 330.

Governor Dunmore called a Council meeting on May 2, 1775, to discuss the matter and attempted to head off any action by Henry and the Hanover militia.¹² It was at this meeting that

11. Page, Register, 148.

12. Quarterly I, Volume 16, 45.

Page and the Governor had their final break. Page recalled the incident thusly:

"I boldly advised the Governor to give up the Powder and Arms, which he had removed from the magazine. But he flew into an outrageous passion, smiting his fist on the table saying, 'Mr. Page, I am astonished at you.'"¹³

Page replied that he had discharged his duty as an advisor and had no more advice to offer.¹⁴ During this exchange, the other Councillors--William Byrd III, William Nelson, John Camm, Ralph Wormeley, and Richard and Gwein Corbin--remained silent, neither supporting Page nor opposing the Governor.¹⁵ The following day, May 3, Dunmore issued a proclamation saying that he meant no harm and promised to return the powder "as soon as the present ferment should subside."¹⁶ On June 2, 1775, however the Governor and his family fled to the safety to the HMS Fowey in the York River.

Because of his action at the May council, Page was not called for the council meeting on board the Fowey and feeling that he had been relieved of his duty, Page returned to "Rosewell". At the July meeting of the Convention of 1775, Page returned to thank Governor Dunmore for his Indian policy, but denounced his new land policy.

A Virginia Convention met on July 17, 1775, to place

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- 13. Quarterly I, Volume 16, 45.
Page, Register, 148.
 - 14. Page, Register, 148.
 - 15. Page, Register, 149.
 - 16. Quarterly I, Volume 16, 45.

Virginia on war preparedness status, and raise two regiments of infantry. They also reorganized the colonial militia which had been dismantled by Governor Dunmore.¹⁷ These actions were necessary because of the outbreak of fighting in the New England, and British rule in Virginia was essentially ended. Under the protection of British warships, Lord Dunmore had begun to terrorize Norfolk and its environs. His men seized a printing press in Norfolk that had been printing revolutionary materials. He proclaimed freedom for all slaves and indentured servants, who would rally to the King's standard. British troops under his command fought two battles with the Virginians. A victory at Kempsville was followed by a defeat at Great Bridge; Norfolk was bombarded in January, 1776, and some colonial forces eventually burned the city to the ground. Driven from the city he occupied Gwynn's Island, near Gloucester County, until forced to flee in July 1776.¹⁸

The July convention established several committees and Page was appointed to two of the most important, the Committee of Public Safety and the Committee for Framing the Declaration of Rights and State Constitution. The Committee of Public Safety was to act as chief executive until a new governor could be chosen. The leadership of the Committee was based on the number of votes its members received. The members were Edmund Pendleton, George Mason, John Page, Richard Elend, Thomas Ludwell Lee, Paul Carrington, Dudley Diggs, Will Cabell,

17. Virginia Magazine, Volume 19, 406.
Robert Meade, Patrick Henry, (New York, 1969), 73.

18. Virginus Dabney, The New Dominion 130 - 133.

Carter Braxton, James Mercer, John Tebbs, and Thomas Walker. These men governed Virginia until Patrick Henry was elected governor under the new state constitution in July, 1776.¹⁹

The Convention established a network of County Committees of Safety and a state committee to which the County Committees reported. The president of the Committee of Public Safety for the colony was Edmund Pendleton, who served from August 17, 1775, to April 2, 1776.²⁰ The Committee provoked some opposition. Charles Lee wrote that its members were timid and hysterical, with the exception of John Page.²¹ On April 2, 1776, Page was elected president of the Committ of Public Safety for the Colony and served until July 5, 1776.²²

Among his other duties, Page personally intervened in behalf of two Tidewater Tories, Robert Sheddon and John Goodrich. Sheddon was accused of importing contraband, and on May 14, 1776, wrote Page from the Williamsburg gaol that he had "been confined upward of three weeks without ever being examined or even accused of anything."²³ Sheddon wanted a new trial as soon as possible. He stated that he had had "a trial

19. Virginia Magazine, Volume 18, 223.

20. Virginia Magazine, Volume 18, 223.

21. Charles Lee to George Washington April 15, 1775. The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscripts and Sources 1745 - 1799. Edited by John Fitzpatrick (Washington, 1931), Volume IV, 451.

22. Calander of State Papers, Volume II, 81. Thereafter cited as State Papers.

23. Virginia Magazine, Volume 16, 40.

on the 3rd of last month by the commander of Norfolk and was acquitted agreeably to the ordinance." James Holt, Esquire, a member of the Committee of Public Safety was present to ensure a proper trial.²⁴ Sheddon was given his new trial, found guilty, and placed on parole at a local plantation. John Goodrich was charged with importing contraband too, with the additional charge of armed resistance to the state. Goodrich wrote Page asking that his wife be allowed to visit him at the Williamsburg gaol to bring him food and comfort. The food was allowed, but the request for his wife to remain with him was denied.²⁵ Goodrich was also found guilty and sentenced to be sent to the Shenandoah Valley with the other prisoners of war. After many pleas from his friends and his wife, the sentence was commuted to parole on a local plantation.²⁶

When the Virginia Convention met on July 5, 1776 to select a new governor, Page was appointed to yet another committee, the State Seal Committee. Another committee, chaired by George Mason, had reported to the convention a device to be used as the state seal. As chairman of the Seal Committee, John Page had the responsibility of supervising the engraving of the state seal. On October 7, 1776 Page, unable to find an engraver in Virginia, informed the Speaker of the House of Delegates that he had written Thomas Jefferson in Philadelphia in an attempt to find an engraver but was not

24. Virginia Magazine, Volume 16, 40.

25. Virginia Magazine, Volume 16, 48.

26. Virginia Magazine, Volume 16, 48.

able to determine the amount of time it would take.²⁷ The attempt to have the seal made in Philadelphia failed, for on December 2, 1776, Page wrote to William Lee in France seeking help. He told Lee that he had been "disappointed in every attempt to procure one in America and at length determined to endeavor to import one from Europe."²⁸ Since there was no further mention of the seal and the state seal was used shortly thereafter, it may be assumed that this French attempt was successful.

In July, 1776, the Revolutionary Convention elected a governor for the Commonwealth. Sixty votes went to Patrick Henry, forty to Thomas Nelson, Sr., and one to John Page.²⁹ After the governor's election, the delegates voted for an advisory group to be called the Privy Council. The person receiving the most votes as Privy Councillor would be the Lieutenant-Governor. Page was elected and became Virginia's first Lieutenant-Governor on July 5, 1776.³⁰

Since Patrick Henry was ill, Lieutenant-Governor acted as the chief of state. Thus, Page received the Declaration of Independence sent to Virginia by the Second Continental Congress. Page had written Thomas Jefferson about a declaration in April, 1776, encouraging Jefferson to push Congress to act on Virginia's initiative.³¹ On July 20, 1776, Page wrote

27. Virginia Magazine, Volume 17, 262.

28. Virginia Magazine, Volume 19, 367 - 369.

29. Robert Meade, Patrick Henry, 127.

30. Robert Meade, Patrick Henry, 127.

31. John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Williamsburg, VA April 6, 1776. Jefferson Papers Library of Congress (Washington, D. C.)

Jefferson and congratulated him on the Declaration saying that he was very pleased with the result.³² Page wrote Congress that he would "take to have the Declaration immediately published so that the people may be universally informed of it."³³ With the Declaration came a request for troops to serve in the Continental Army. Page replied, that the governor and the Privy Council having no authority to act on this request, it would have to wait until the General Assembly met.³⁴

The authority of the governor was a problem for the new commonwealth, the state constitution divided power between the governor and his advisory council. By August 7, 1777 the problem became serious enough for Page to write:

"it is with great concern I hear a member of this Board so often endeavoring to alter a mode of proceeding which has been uniformly pursued till of late, which has been even at times examined by and had approval of the Legislature."³⁵

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32. John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Williamsburg, VA July 20, 1776. Jefferson Papers Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.)
 33. John Page, Letter to Congress, Williamsburg, VA July 20, 1776. Jefferson Papers Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.)
 34. John Page, Letter to Congress, Williamsburg, VA July 20, 1776. Official Letters to the Governors of the State of Virginia (Richmond, 1926), 1, 11.
 35. John Page, Letter, 1777. "mode of proceeding" The Governor was to get the advice of the Privy Council before acting on laws. Many times Patrick Henry's failure to do so caused problems with the Privy Council. Page collection Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Page asserted "that the governor or his substitute representative and the Privy Council jointly not separately are solely vested with the executive powers of this commonwealth."³⁶ The Convention instituted the Privy Council, not to exercise the power of an aristocracy, but to restrain the encroachment of a tyrant in the person of the Chief Magistrate of the state; not to execute the laws themselves, but to assist in the execution.³⁷ Page concluded that he was:

"against the opinion that the governor can ably enact any business of government not expressly directed by law, without the advice of the Privy Council as an opinion dangerous in the consequence to the People and utterly incompatible with the fundamental principles of our Constitution."³⁸

The problem was not solved until the Privy Council was removed as part of the Governor's staff in 1829.

After serving with Patrick Henry for three one-year terms, Page stood for governor in 1779 against Thomas Jefferson. The gubernatorial campaign for that year was probably the most peaceful ever run in the state because Page and Jefferson retired to their respective plantations after the nominations to wait for the vote of the General Assembly. The friend-

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36. John Page, Letter August 7, 1777. Page collection Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. This letter is not addressed to anyone and contains only one and one half pages.
37. John Page, Letter August 7, 1777. Page Collection Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. This letter is not addressed to anyone and contains only one and one half pages.
38. John Page, Letter August 7, 1777. Page Collection Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. This letter is not addressed to anyone and contains only one and one half pages.

ship that had developed between the two while in college remained as strong as ever. The final vote in the House of Delegates was close, Thomas Jefferson received sixty-seven votes to Page's sixty-one. When Jefferson took office in 1780, Page decided he had served the time "contemplated by the constitution", and returned to "Rosewell" in hopes of putting in order his financial affairs which had worsened with each tobacco crop.³⁹ This "retirement" was short lived as he was, by 1780, the commander of the Gloucester County Militia.

Except for an occasional British raid, Virginia had been free from war. In late 1780, Generals William Phillips and Benedict Arnold came from New York with a large force. Phillips died soon after his arrival and Arnold assumed command. It was Arnold's force that Lord Cornwallis intended to meet when his army entered Virginia from the south in spring of 1781. By May, Cornwallis, was camped in Petersburg with 7,200 British soldiers. As in the Carolinas, where Cornwallis fought Greene, the American Army, under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette, never engaged the British Army in pitched battle. Cornwallis was able to control the populated area in the Tidewater but was ineffective in other parts of the state.

Cornwallis's problems were not limited to his inability to engage the Americans in a decisive battle. In New York, fearing an all out attack by American and French forces against Manhattan Island, Clinton, on July 1, 1781, ordered Cornwallis to return 3,000 British regulars. To ship the

39. Page, Register, 148.

troops North, Cornwallis moved to Portsmouth. Clinton was indecisive. He ordered the troops to New York, then changed his mind, then changed it again. Finally on July 20, Clinton decided that the troops should remain with Cornwallis. Also included in the dispatch of July 20, was the order for Cornwallis to establish a naval base from which he could be supplied and from which naval operations against American privateers could be mounted. Clinton suggested either Hampton Roads or the Yorktown-Gloucester area. Cornwallis, feeling the Yorktown-Gloucester area better served his purpose, moved his army there.

With all the British activity in the eastern part of the state, in the spring and early summer of 1781, Colonel Page was worried about the effect on the people of Gloucester County. On June 27, 1781, Page communicated this concern to his old friend, Colonel James Innes. To Page it appeared that Gloucester and the surrounding area would suffer from both the Continental Army and its French ally, and from the enemy. Both armies would be expecting to live off the land. Thus Page was pleased to learn that Marquis de Lafayette planned to forage as little as possible in Gloucester County.

The morale of the Patriots in the Gloucester area was another concern. With Cornwallis's movements almost completely unchecked, the Tories of the area were courageous and the patriots more dishearten.⁴⁰

40. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 27, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

Page also worried about mustering and arming the local militia. The removal of the cannons at the request of Lafayette from Gloucester Courthouse did not bother him because the British and their allies could not send their deep draft ships, navy or privateers, up the river to plunder the entire area and Page had two cannons at his disposal. He felt "that the two or three guns at Gloucester Town are no object to induce Mr. Alexander (a local Tory) to make a serious attack upon that place."⁴¹ Alexander commanded a mixture of British soldiers and Tories. Page was sure he could repel any British raid against Gloucester.⁴²

Page had ordered lookouts placed at possible enemy landing points on the York River and put Captain Thomas Eddins in command of the pickets. Page also ordered Eddins to make one of his two cannons portable and furnished the means for doing so, thus preventing its possible capture by the British. Page was doubtful that Eddins' men could use the cannons in any extended fight because the men had "but little very little" powder for them.⁴³ Even with the limited supply of powder, Page felt that the two cannons, an eighteen pounder and an old twelve pounder, would be as much as

41. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 27, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

42. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 27, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

43. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 27, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

Captain Eddins could manipulate and would be a deterrent to the British if they happened to attack by using flat bottom barges to navigate the York River.⁴⁴ With Page at Gloucester Courthouse on June 26, were about one hundred fifty men "tolerably armed".⁴⁵ He planned to add twenty-five men from nearby Fox Ferry and another "small party" from Duvall's.⁴⁶

By June, 1781, the British had occupied Williamsburg and Portsmouth. From their camp in Williamsburg, they sent patrols into the surrounding areas. Colonel Page told Colonel Innes about contact made between a British patrol and one of his Virginia pickets. The patrol was part of a cavalry unit, returning from a reconnaissance of the area and traveling along the beach near Yorktown. Eddins fired upon them with the eighteen pounder, the shot being so "well directed" that it covered the British with sand and sent their mounts "off like devils". The British, attempted to regroup, but Eddins quickly routed them with a second shot. British patrols were not seen

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44. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 26, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.
 45. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 26, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.
 46. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 26, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

in that area again until late July.⁴⁷

By mid-July a British decision to secure the area was made and by the end of the month, Cornwallis occupied the Yorktown-Gloucester area for his base. The British met no organized military resistance except for the local militia band, commanded by Colonel John Page and Colonel Sir John Peyton.

Shortly after the arrival of the British troops, Colonel Peyton rode to Kingston, Virginia, for reinforcements. Colonel Page sent an order to the Gloucester County lieutenant to muster the militia. The lieutenant did not receive the orders until one week after the landing of the British at Yorktown-Gloucester. Therefore, only one-hundred-two Virginians assembled, exclusive of officers. They came chiefly from nearby Ware and Petsworth Parishes in Gloucester.

Page decided to wait near Gloucester Courthouse in hopes that reinforcements would arrive from the neighboring counties. By ten o'clock on the night of July 30, no reinforcements having appeared, Colonel Page decided to retreat. He moved his troops to King and Queen County, hoping to meet any Virginia Militia, but came upon none. He stopped at Duvall's for an hour, but fearing the British pursuit, he took his troops to the hill on the King and Queen side of Whiting's Mill, at which point he camped and waited for reinforcements. At Whiting's Mill Captain Eddins and his artilleryists rejoined

47. John Page to Colonel James Innes, "Rosewell," June 26, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University Durham, North Carolina.

ed Page's command. Captain Eddins had covered the retreat of the militia by firing the old twelve pounder at the flatbottomed boats the British were now using as transports to cross the York River. The Gloucester Militia had also taken the precaution of removing two borrowed French eighteen pounders while Cornwallis was in Williamsburg and these had not fallen into the hands of the British.⁴⁸

Colonel Peyton joined the Gloucester Militia at Whiting's Mill with the Kingston Militia in the early hours of August 1. While at Whiting's Mill, Page and Peyton had not been inactive. Colonel Peyton had ordered all horses east of the Courthouse to be give over to his command, and when he returned with the Kingston Militia he herded them with him. Page also ordered all Negroes, horses, and livestock removed to prevent seizure by the British.

To Page's surprise the British were very cautious. They went only three miles from Gloucester Courthouse to build earthworks. Some of the people of the area, much to Page's dismay, joined the enemy. He also received information that the British were sending smallpox victims into the countryside to infect the local populace.⁴⁹

Colonel Page managed to save extra munitions when the Gloucester Militia retreated from the Courthouse, but he was not able to supply sufficiently, the King and Queen's Militia when they arrived at Whiting's Mill on August 3. Since he

48. State Papers, Volume 2, 299.

49. State Papers, Volume 2, 300.

was not able to properly arm this unit it was sent home, but the Gloucester Militia remained at Whiting's Mill. Page sent post riders in the direction of the British to have any advance warning of movement, but the British were content to remain within their lines. The Gloucester Militia was still at Whiting's Mill until General Washington arrived from the north to take command of the forces at Yorktown. At that time the Gloucester militia joined Washington's forces.⁵⁰

Page's problem at Whiting's Mill was not confined to the British. He wrote Governor Thomas Nelson that an execution of an order by the Marquis de Lafayette for sending to his camp "all the beaves driven out of the way of the enemy and that could be procured" would put the area in danger of starving.⁵¹ He continued that it "would be hard upon the wretched inhabitants of these plundered counties if they alone should be compelled to feed both their enemies and their friends."⁵² If this was done then the inhabitants would be forced "to give up a considerable portion of their shattered fortunes to purchase even their daily rations from speculators."⁵³ Page wanted provisions brought from the counties not directly involved in the fighting and to requisition as little supplies as possible from the people of the area

50. State Papers, Volume 2, 301.

51. State Papers, Volume 2, 408.

52. State Papers, Volume 2, 408.

53. State Papers, Volume 2, 408.

where most of the fighting would be centered. Page also told Nelson that the militia, "under one pretense or another, had sulked at home" and that he was attempting to get all the men into the militia who were supposed to be there.⁵⁴

After the British surrender on October 19, 1781, Page returned home to find that the surrender had not eased the poor economic situation of the area. On October 22, Captain Thomas Lilly stopped at "Rosewell" to purchase provisions for the French ship Valiant, a man of war, then lying in the York River. Page told him that the availability of supplies was poor. Yet Captain Lilly prevailed upon Page to sell "several articles which in (his) situation (he) could but ill spare, and these at half the price they commanded at Williamsburg, York, or Gloucester."⁵⁵ In addition, Page agreed to help canvass the area for provisions while Lilly went further up the York River. Upon Lilly's return he found that Page had been unable to acquire any provision. Page, however, did allow the Captain to deal with his slaves. Lilly bought a number of fowls from the Negroes, who had collected them and were ready to sell. Lilly told the French sailors with him to strike their own bargains, and he paid the slaves for his supplies.⁵⁶

Page made more than contributions of food and service

54. State Papers, Volume 2, 409.

55. John Page, Disposition for Captain Lilly, November 6, 1781. Page Collection.

56. John Page, Disposition for Captain Lilly, November 6, 1781. Page Collection.

giving money and allowing the use of his house. A letter from Edmund Pendleton encouraged him to request payment from the Commonwealth of Virginia for the lead that he removed from his window sashes to make bullets for the allied army.⁵⁷ Page was also concerned with financing of the war effort, but felt that Virginia's "resources will never be exhausted while the people cheerfully strengthen the hands of government."⁵⁸ So convinced was Page of necessity of civilian help that he loaned 500 to be repaid by the state in six months. He hoped others would contribute to the state treasury when he wrote that:

"the subscribers wellknowing the advantage which must occur to our country from her being able to purchase the necessary supplies for the army and navy with ready money as well as how essentially necessary it is to support the credit of our Treasury, especially at these critical times."⁵⁹

Page wanted Virginia and her sister states to be able to finish "the glorious work as well begun, the immortal work of rescuing millions from the tyranny of Britain and giving freedom and happiness to nations yet unborn."⁶⁰ Page's example convinced two other men to contribute; Thomas Nelson loaned 5,000 for six months and one "G. T." loaned 1,000 for

57. Alice Cates, "Rosewell", 452.

58. John Page, notes, 1781. Page Collection.

59. John Page, notes, 1781. Page Collection.

60. John Page, notes, 1781. Page Collection.

four months.⁶¹ These men gave good British sterling but lost their investments after the war because the state of Virginia annulled all promises to pay notes in full.⁶²

From 1781 to 1783, Page was at "Rosewell" attempting to recover from some of the losses suffered in support of the Revolution, but by the latter date found himself once again in public service. On October 27, Governor Benjamin Harrison appointed him to the commission to establish the western boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania. Page accepted, and in doing so declined a local office, Sheriff of York County. He wrote to Harrison, however, that it would not be possible to make the necessary astronomical observations until the summer of 1784 and that he thought it would take five months for the line observations.⁶³ The Virginia delegation left on July 1, and by August 17 the observations were well under way. The delegation reported to the Governor that they purchased the needed instruments for four-hundred quineas and that they would finish near the end of September. In the report, Page requested that money be sent to meet the current needs of the commission. Page and Robert Andrews had had to borrow one-hundred-fifty in Virginia currency from the

61. John Page, notes, 1781. Page Collection, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. In his notes Page did not identify G. T. and no mention of a G. T. is in any notes.

62. Allan Nevins, The American States During and after the Revolution, (New York, 1924), 486.

63. State Papers, Volume 3, 537, 545.

Pennsylvania delegation.⁶⁴

On October 4, Page returned to Virginia with the line observation, his part of the work, completed. (The actual line was drawn by Robert Andrews.) Page requested reimbursement for expenses incurred which on the commission that were paid out of his pocket.⁶⁵ Finally, on April 12, 1785, Page requested Governor Patrick Henry to remove him from the line commission to attend to personal business.⁶⁶ At this time Page was preparing to run for the House of Delegates.

64. State Papers, Volume 3, 606.

65. State Papers, Volume 3, 614.

66. State Papers, Volume 4, 23.

Chapter III

State and Federal Service 1787 - 1808

By the time of the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781, the Articles of Confederation for Perpetual Union had been accepted by all the states. The United States governed itself under this document until the adoption of the Constitution of 1787. In 1788 the Constitution was being considered.

When the Virginia Convention of 1788 met to consider the adoption of the Federal Constitution most of the prominent men of Virginia were there. Although he was not a member of the Virginia Convention, John Page worked diligently for ratification in his native state. Page wrote Thomas Jefferson that he was willing to use whatever influence he could muster in the cause of ratification. Page also confessed that when the document was first presented he had been an enemy, but he realized that his objections were "founded on wrong principles" and he had changed his mind. Two items were the basis of his changed mind. First was the Bill of Rights, proposed at the Convention by fellow Virginian George Mason, but not adopted by the Convention. Second was the amendment process. It had been virtually impossible to amend the Articles of Confederation because all the states had to agree to the Amendment. Under the New Constitution, only three-fourths of the states had to agree. Page now hoped that the Constitution would be adopted without "attempts to make amendments which might be made with more probability of success

in the manner pointed out be the Constitution itself."¹

Page was a Federalist but he was also a strict constructionist like his friend Jefferson. This was consistent with the principles he had expressed in 1777 concerning the relationship between branches of government. When he was Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, Page had worked for the delineation of power between the Governor's Office and the General Assembly.

In the first federal election, Page ran unopposed for the Congress, representing the Fifth Congressional District of Virginia, consisting of York, Matthews, and Gloucester counties. The new Congress met in New York City on March 4, 1789, but because of the bad weather, Page, James Madison, and Richard Bland Lee did not arrive until March 14, 1789.² While in New York City, Page roomed with Madison at 19 Maiden Lane.

The capital of the reorganized United States government was to be in New York City for only one year, or until a permanent seat of government could be decided upon. Page privately favored the proposal to make Philadelphia the Capital, but when fellow representatives maligned the inhabitants of New York City, Page defended them. Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia referred to New York City as "a sinkhole of vice". Page, on the other hand, "declared that New York

1. John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Rosewell, March 7, 1788. Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

2. Page, Genealogy, 29.

was superior to any place he knew, for orderly and decent behavior of its inhabitants. Page's conception of New York City may have been tinted as at this time he met his second wife, Margaret Lowther, daughter of William Lowther, recently of Scotland.³

During the session, Page concerned himself with the many problems that arose under the Constitution. One was the salary of the President, the Vice-President, and the members of Congress. Page told the House that the President and the Vice-President should be paid a salary sufficient to free them from any pressure created by a lack of money. The use of an expense account by George Washington during the Revolution also convinced many that a salary was the best way to pay these men for their service. Page felt the President should receive a salary of at least \$30,000 and the Vice-President, \$25,000. Senators should be paid more than the members of the House of Representatives, and both should be paid enough to keep them independent of outside pressure.⁴ Public officials, he thought, should be responsive to the voice of the people, not to moneyed interest groups.

Page, who had supported the new Constitution on the promise of a Bill of Rights, was eager to have them written

3. Page, Genealogy, 75.
Rufus Wilmot Criswold, The Republican Court (New York, 1855), 232.

4. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session (Washington, 1834), 659, 683, 936.

and ratified by the states. The fervor for the Bill of Rights died away when the Constitution was ratified, and when James Madison introduced the resolution for a Bill of Rights, many Congressmen opposed, saying that they were untimely. Congress' procrastination during the summer of 1789 led the supporters of the of the supporters of the amendments to protest this unnecessary delay. Page, feeling that the people would lose faith in Congress and call for new state conventions, wanted the amendments considered immediately. After all it was the promise of a Bill of Rights that helped the supporters of the Constitution to get it ratified in Virginia.⁵ Finally in September, 1789, Congress submitted twelve amendments to the states, which ratified ten and rejected two. Page was pleased with the outcome.

Limiting the power of the Presidency also interested Page, and since the Constitution was silent on the question of whether the power of removal from office was a function of the chief executive, it posed a problem. He expressed his opinion in a debate over the establishment of a Department of State Affairs, but Page was not successful in blocking the removal power of the President. Page feared that if the President retained removal power then he could establish a bureaucracy loyal only to him, consequently this could lead to the establishment of a monarchy.⁶

5. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session, 446, 687, 734.

6. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session, 659, 683, 936.

Page's belief in the separation of powers was made very evident while he was in Congress. When the organization of the Treasury Department was under discussion in the House of Representatives, a Congressman from New Jersey, Elias Boudinot, proposed that the Secretary of the Treasury have the authority to "digest and report plans" to the members of the House. Page quickly attacked this proposal, stating that to give this power to the Secretary would infringe upon the constitutional privileges of the House of Representatives.⁷

Page also felt that in conjunction with the Senate's and the President's right to make and ratify treaties, any treaty which dealt with money needed to be considered by the House since any expenditure of revenue had to be authorized by that body. Page first expressed this idea in connection with the Indian treaties being considered by the Senate in 1789, but was not able to get the House to approve the idea of the need to ratify any treaty dealing with money.⁸ The President had proposed with the Indian treaties being considered, that commissioners be established to administer the Indians. Page felt that this required expenditure needed the approval of the House. Page felt that the President and Senate might do as they pleased with respect to Negotiation and call upon the House to pay if they did not act to ensure the right guaranteed to it under the Constitution.

7. Ralph Harlow, *The History of Legislative Methods in the Period Before 1825* (London, 1917), 131.

8. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session, 717 - 718.

When the Jay Treaty was presented for ratification in 1795, the role of the House in the treaty making-process arose again. The Jay Treaty, among other things, provided that States would pay debts owed by its citizens to British merchants. Since this provision required spending money, Page contended that the House should be asked to vote on just that part of the treaty. Since the House could not voice its opinion, Page felt that Jay's Treaty was "unconstitutional and pernicious" and that it would be dishonorable for the House to vote the funds to put the treaty into effect. Again Page was unsuccessful.⁹

Of all the proposals made to the first Congress, the one to which Page was most opposed was Alexander Hamilton's plan of Funding and Assumption. The major points of his plan were the funding of the national debt at par, the assumption of state debts, the establishment of a national bank, the creation of a sinking fund, and an excise tax on distilled liquors. Page believed that the public debt of the United States should be paid in full; but that since the state of Virginia had already paid the largest portion of her debt, he thought that assumption of state debts would be unfair to her and other states that had paid their debts. He also felt that the policy was not within the constitutional authority of Congress and that it would be injurious to the national government and the state legislatures.¹⁰ Congress

9. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session, 1097.

10. John Page, Address to the Citizens of the District of York, (Philadelphia, 1797), 25.

should establish its own credit and then "hold forth its protecting hand to the weaker states" so that they could be able to prosper and eventually pay their own debts honorably.¹¹

The Hamiltonian plan was finally settled by an agreement between Hamilton and Jefferson. Jefferson convinced Alexander White and Richard Eland Lee of Virginia and Daniel Carroll of Maryland to vote for the Hamilton plan in exchange for the location of a permanent national capital on the Potomac River.¹² Although a close friend of his, Jefferson did not try to get Page to change his vote.

Page also opposed the excise tax on distilled liquors, part of Hamilton's plan, yet when farmers in western Pennsylvania rebelled against the tax, Page was ready to fight for its imposition. When the Whiskey Rebellion erupted in 1794, Page assumed his position as commander of a Virginia regiment. This was a sacrifice for Page for he wrote:

"I took my tour of duty as commander of a Regiment, composing part of the quota called from Virginia, to quell the insurgents in the Western Country. Though sick, I marched and joined my Major General at Frankfort near the foot of the Alleghany, who finding me actually ill, wrote me a consolatory letter and advised me to return home by slow marches."¹³

Page opposed the excise tax but once it had become law he

11. Annals of Congress, 2 session, 1550.

12. Paul Ford, ed., The Works of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1905), Volume 1, 177.

13. Page, Memories, 151.

was willing to enforce it.¹⁴

Page was elected to four terms in the House of Representatives. He was very conscientious about his job as a people's representative and felt that his constituents should be informed of his actions in Congress. He also felt that all people should be informed of the actions of their representatives and encouraged the use of shorthand writers in Congress to keep a record of what transpired.¹⁵ To his own constituents, Page began an address in 1794, but due to the Whiskey Rebellion and his congressional duties, it was not finished until 1797. Page belatedly explained his ideas about the duties of a member of the House of Representatives; they should, he thought, be attentive and responsive to their fellow citizens and should be ready to supply their constituents with information needed or desired. But in serving the people, the representative's major duty was that of serving the country through Congress. He should work for their best interests, even if it meant not pleasing the voters all the time. Page felt that he, as a representative, was directed "by true republican principles, and by the knowledge of the interest of citizens of the United States."¹⁶ Despite these high ideals, he was defeated for a fifth term in 1798.

14. Page, Memories, 151.

15. Annals of Congress, 1 Congress, 1 session, 954.

16. John Page, Address to the Citizens of the District of York, 25.

In his autobiography, Page attributed his defeat to the maneuvering of John Adams and Alexander Hamilton.¹⁷ Yet in an address to the people of York on November 16, 1798, Page attributed his defeat by Thomas Evans to different reasons. Page wrote that Evans' opposition to him was founded on a mistake supported by misconceptions of Page's conduct and political sentiment. Page was accused of opposing the executive office and of having misplaced loyalties towards France. In opposing the executive office, Page was doing what he felt was his most important duty, opposing the concentration of too much power in one branch of government. In his terms as a Congressman he wanted to establish precedents judged "indispensably necessary to secure the rights of the people."¹⁸

The accusation of misplaced loyalty toward France was based on Page's belief that the French had been instrumental in securing American independence from the British; therefore, it was just and politic to cherish good will with France. Page also felt that the United States should be on guard against the tricks of the British monarchy, preferring a connection with France, which had just overthrown its monarch. He believed that British policies would be restrictive to the prosperity of the United States. The question of Page's attitude toward France was the primary reason for his defeat. Many

17. Page, Memories, 151.

18. John Page, Address, November 16, 1798.

Virginians still remembered the Genet Affair, and the recent news of the XYZ Affair and Quasi War with France made Page's support of France a liability. Page was not reelected to Congress, and he failed again in 1800.¹⁹

Unable to be elected to Congress, Page ran for Governor of Virginia, and was elected on December 11, 1802. His acceptance was presented to the General Assembly on December 27, at which time Page was sworn in by James Hylton, Chief Justice of Virginia.²⁰ Governor Page began his term two days later, December 29, when he attended his first official Council meeting.²¹ Page's Governorship faced few emergencies, and his duties were mainly the routine, filling of positions vacated by resignations or retirement.

Page's belief limited government and the enforcement of law lead to an administration that strayed little from the letter of the state constitution. One of the areas he tightened involved the proper selection of county sheriffs and justices of the peace. The enforcement of the law had become lax. Sheriffs were to be elected for a two year term and when elected had to apply for their commission

19. John Page, Address to the Citizens of the District of York, 32.

20. William Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers (Richmond, 1875), Volume IX, 340. Hereafter cited as State Papers.

21. Earl Swem, Bibliography of Virginia (Richmond, 1918) Volume II, 1054.

within a month or the election return would be cancelled.²² Many sheriffs were not applying for their commission or were applying late and the new Governor intended for them to adhere to the letter of the law.²³ When new justices of the peace were appointed, all the justices of the peace had to be present. If not, the new justice received no commission. The Governor notified all county clerks that if the law was not followed commissions would not be given.²⁴

Page was restrained while governor by his belief in the limitation of executive power. When requested by a group of citizens to remove a judge for oppressive actions, Page replied that he did not have the power.²⁵ When asked to check on illegal voting practices in Mason County, he replied that he would do everything within his power to see that the laws of the state were enforced.²⁶

One of the powers that Governor Page felt he had was to act as arbitrator in the settling of debts and disputes to which Virginia was a party. Page personally helped settle such claims. He suggested to the General Assembly that they established a fund to pay the heirs of Caron de Beaumarchais £ 11,372.15s.2d. This was to compensate for

22. Executive Letter Book 1802 - 1805, (Richmond), 139. Hereafter cited as Executive Book.

23. Executive Book, 145.

24. Executive Book, 2.

25. Executive Book, 391 - 392.

26. Executive Book, 170 - 171.

the money and aid Beaumarchais had contributed to the cause of the American Revolution, especially in Virginia. In 1804, the sum of \$37,820.33 was paid to settle the claim. Governor Page also suggested that an additional 2,688 livres be paid to James Monroe to reimburse him for the money he had given to Jean Antoine Houdon for the statue of George Washington. Monroe had paid Houdon the extra money in addition to what the state of Virginia authorized because Houdon asked for more than the original appropriation.²⁷

Although Governor Page worked to settle local claims, he did not interfere in the problem of debts Virginians owed the British merchants. The Governor believed that gentleman's agreement was better than legal action. Whenever the question about these old claims arose, Page referred them to the State Attorney, General Phillip Norborne Nicholas.²⁸

A practice of the British Navy, or any navy, that was despised by the citizenry was the act of impressment. A navy officer accompanied by some sailors would kidnap men to serve aboard their warships. Governor Page attempted to prevent this from occurring and when it did occur, he attempted to correct the injustice. In 1803, Colonel Thomas Newton reported to Governor Page that a British privateer had docked at Norfolk to buy supplies for its voyage. During their stay, the officers of the ship had illegally impressed three American citizens. One of the three had escaped and had reported the impressment to Newton. A second incident was

27. Executive Book, 152 - 153.

28. State Papers, Volume IX, 377 - 379.

reported shortly afterwards by Benjamin White. White reported that two British Naval Officers, accompanied by an American Naval officer, attempted to impress a Dane for the British warship. When the Dane resisted, some Americans came to his aid. The British officers threatened to attempt to impress everyone, then left.²⁹ Because of these incidents, Page sent a note of protest to President Jefferson and requested that the men impressed while in Virginia be returned to that state.

Because of the savagery of Gabriel's Insurrection of 1800, Governor Page had already had under consideration, a plan for improvement of the militia and a defense system. The British infractions of sovereignty were the decisive factors towards establishing a well-armed militia that could defend Virginia. The Governor became interested in the development of a Richmond Arms Manufacturing plant to accomplish his objective.³⁰ The plant was able to supply most of the arms needed by the state. By December, 1804, the plant was in complete operation, employing one hundred fifty people and producing muskets, rifles, pistols, and swords.³¹

Governor Page proposed to the General Assembly that it establish small arsenals at each courthouse. There would be an armorer, whose duty would be to dispense and

29. State Papers, Volume IX, 369.

30. Hening, Statutes at Large, Volume II, 87.

31. State Papers, Volume IX, 373.

maintain the arms. To help protect the arsenals, militia force would stand guard on a rotational basis, with each arsenal guard consisting of a corporal and six men. The General Assembly did not approve this plan and no system of county arsenals was ever established. Governor Page, unable to implement this plan, decided he would order the collection and maintenance of the arms the state already owned. The location of the collection depot would be Richmond.³²

Governor Page also sought to insure accountability of local militia commanders by placing commissions on a yearly basis and by making renewal of their rank dependent upon the presentation of a certificate of proof that they had drilled their troops. The Governor wanted the brigadiers to attend all muster meetings and report on militia strength and readiness so that the governor would be informed at all times on the state of the militia. Page also wanted a penalty for the sale or destruction of muskets, a penalty he thought would reduce the loss of arms at the hands of the militia.³³ The General Assembly passed this proposal.

Another problem that troubled Page's administration was slavery. Page favored gradual emancipation for the slaves coupled with colonization, a stand taken by many prominent Virginians. Colonization was first approached

32. Executive Book, 212 - 213.

33. Executive Book, 210 - 212.

in the administration of Governor James Monroe. Page hoped to establish a fund for the purchase, removal, and education of young slaves, and to prohibit the introduction of new slaves into Virginia. Money for this project was to be raised by a tax on slaves and voluntary contributions.³⁴

Although Page considered Louisiana, he preferred to have either Sierra Leone or Santo Domingo as possible areas for colonization or asylum. Sierra Leone was the haven for former slaves of the British Empire, but it was a British colony and accepted free Negroes from other British colonies first; therefore its use would be limited. Santo Domingo, the closest and most convenient location, was racked with rebellions at this time and was not considered suitable. As for Louisiana, President Jefferson was not able to give Governor Page any specific information.³⁵

In spite of continued frustration, Page worked for fair and peaceful solutions to the black problem. Towards this end, the Governor wrote the county clerks that under Virginia law a slave had certain rights. The slave could not be condemned to death unless all the justices of the court agreed on the verdict. The slave must have a lawyer, and a statement must be sent to the governor that all legal requirements had been met.³⁶ In two cases, Page took execut-

34. State Papers, Volume IX, 419 - 420.

35. State Papers, Volume IX, 433.

36. Executive Book, 450.

ive action because of irregularities. If at all possible, Page would commute death sentences to deportation, thus ridding the community of the criminal slave and serving humanitarian purposes. As Governor, Page also supported harsh punishment for anyone convicted of kidnapping free Negroes and selling them into slavery.³⁷

While John Page's efforts in behalf of colonization did not materialize, his work, along with others such as Jefferson and Monroe, resulted in the establishment of the American Colonization Society. Page, however, did not live long enough to see the limited success of this venture, but he worked hard for its development.

Governor Page's administration ended on December 11, 1805. As he was ill when he left office and needed a job, President Jefferson appointed him loan officer at Richmond, a position he held until his death in 1808. The pay from this job enabled Page to keep "Rosewell," but when his second wife died in 1838, "Rosewell" had to be sold.

37. State Papers, Volume IX, 396.

Chapter IV

Personal Interest

Mann Page II's gift of "Rosewell" to John Page at his marriage was more of a burden than a gift to the younger man. He was the third generation to farm the tobacco plantation, and like many of the time, the land was over worked and produced poorly. From the beginning, Page was indebted to the British merchants and, like his father, used John Norton and Sons, merchants of London and Virginia, as the company for marketing his tobacco in England and for purchasing the goods which he imported.

In July 1768, Page, in anticipation of the sale of fourteen hogsheads of tobacco, ordered various necessities from his London factor.¹ In August, Page was forced to borrow £ 52 from John Norton's son, who was in Virginia at the time. Page was expecting a good harvest of corn for repayment that year but the tobacco crop was not expected to be as good as the previous year.² In April 1769, Page wrote John Norton that he would not be able to pay his accumulated debt of £ 324, blaming the expenses of housekeeping and the extravagances of "Furgess making".³ Housekeeping for Page included the upkeep of 160 Negroes, 363 horses, 1,568 cattle, and 46 riding vehicles.⁴ The

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1. Francis Norton Mason, John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia (Richmond, 1937), 57 - 58.
 2. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 64.
 3. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 91.
 4. Virginia Magazine, Volume 3, 324 - 325.

expense of "Eurgess making" included the entertainment of constituents and the maintenance of a residence in Williamsburg during sessions of the Assembly.

In a letter to Norton, May 1769, Page attempted to explain the problems which had caused him to fall into debt. The expense of electioneering was greater than he had anticipated, and this, coupled with the scarcity of hard money in the colony and the shortage of the tobacco crop for the past four years, caused him to overextend himself. Page hoped to free himself of debt by hiring a new overseer and improving his tobacco crop for the next year.⁵ Page also deplored the turmoil between the colonies and the mother country. Page was sorry, he wrote, to see such unsteadiness in the British government and discontent in the English colonies. Yet he felt that the general complaining against the "arbitrary proceeding of Parliament" was just. Many people were provoked at the severe restriction of trade caused by The Revenue Act of 1764, and The Revenue Act of 1767.⁶ Page felt that the problem was Parliament's, not the King's, and that Lord Camden and the Earl of Chatham favored the colonists. Parliament's actions were clearly "unconstitutional and impolitic".⁷ He hoped that the objectional legislation of Parliament would be repealed before the General Assembly met in May 1769. He

5. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 94.

6. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 64.

7. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 65.

added, however, that the crown's representative in Virginia, Lord Botetourt, was well-liked.⁸

In May 1769, Page wrote to John Norton that he ascribed to the Non-Importation agreement to boycott British goods, and would order nothing more from England. He had joined because he felt that the agreement would force the repeal of those "disagreeable acts of Parliament" and help clear the colonies of British debt.⁹ Page was critical of Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Colonies, for his handling of the disorders in Britain and Hillsborough's letter to Governor Sir Francis Bernard of Massachusetts concerning the assembly's circular letter. Resolution of outstanding differences would return business to normal.¹⁰

Although the American boycott was successful and the hated acts were repealed, the embargo did not help Page reduce his debt. By July 1771, he was ordering supplies that he needed and, as before, expenditures exceeded income.¹¹ In order to produce more tobacco, Page considered using his land in Spottsylvania County which could outproduce the "Rosewell lands. If that failed, Page would be forced to sell some of his slaves.¹² The 1771 tobacco crop was not what Page had expected, and by the end of that year, he was once again forced to borrow from the Norton Company, this

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- 8. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 91.
 - 9. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 94.
 - 10. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 94.
 - 11. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 172.
 - 12. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 199.

time £ 150.¹³ Eventually, as anticipated, Page was forced to sell some slaves and land to pay his debt.

Page was never able to make "Rosewell" pay. The only other source of income was the government posts which he held. He realized that many government officials were in the same economic straits and were vulnerable to bribery. Consequently, Page advocated higher salaries for government officials.

At "Rosewell", Page often indulged his interest in science which included such things as atmospheric measurements, electricity, and celestial observations. In one scientific experiment, Page used a new instrument he designed and had built in England to measure the amount of moisture, dew and rain, a device accurate to three hundredths of an inch. He kept exact records on the moisture at "Rosewell" and "Shelly" for comparison and felt that this was a first in America, maybe even the world.¹⁴ Page was also the first American to correctly predict an eclipse that would occur in North America.¹⁵

In 1779, fifty years before Michael Faraday explained magnetism, Page wrote of his ideas on the connection between magnetism and electricity which later proved to be correct.¹⁶ In a letter to David Rittenhouse of Philadelphia, Page ex-

13. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 211.

14. Quarterly, Series 1 Volume 24, 220.

15. Mason, John Norton & Sons, 338 - 339.

16. Quarterly, Series 1 Volume 24, 222.

plained that the phenomena was "something like the two electricities in the attraction and repulsion of the two poles."¹⁷ He also contended that "magnetism is only a species of electricity, whose matter is as yet not discovered by human sight."¹⁸ He felt that there was a connection in the way electricity attracted or repelled bodies and magnets repelled or attracted iron. He wished for more time to experiment on the causes and effects of electrical polarization and needles.¹⁹

Also in 1779, a meteor, with a very bright trail of light, was visible in the evening sky. Page recorded the sighting on October 31, 1779, about 6:10 P.M. three to four degrees northwest of "Rosewell". The display of light continued for fifteen minutes. The tail of the meteor was described as shining silver and Page drew the five stages of this trail of light.²⁰

The promising scientist, much to his dismay, was kept from devoting more time to his scientific interest by the management of "Rosewell". Nevertheless, in May 1773, Page became Vice-President of the Virginia Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, which was patterned after the Royal Society of London and Franklin's American

17. American Philosophical Society, (Philadelphia) Volume 173. Hereinafter cited as Philosophical Society.

18. Philosophical Society, Volume 2, 174.

19. Philosophical Society, Volume 2, 174.

20. Philosophical Society, Volume 2, 174.

Philosophical Society, of which it later became part.²¹
On June 15, 1774, Page became President of the Virginia branch and received an honorary degree from the Royal Society of London as well as one from William and Mary College.²²

Another great interest was the Anglican Church. He was a vestryman of Bruton Parish in Williamsburg for many years. When dissenters attacked the Established Church, Page came to its defense. By the late eighteenth century, the Baptists and the Presbyterians had become bitter opponents of the Established Church. The members of these dissenting sects flooded the General Assembly with petitions for greater religious freedom and the total separation of church and state.

The first formal step towards religious separation in Virginia came with the organization of the Virginia's armed forces for the American Revolution in 1775. The Virginia Convention at Richmond granted each denomination the right to perform its services for its followers in the army. In 1776, with the drafting of the Virginia Constitution, the move for religious equality gained momentum. The sixteenth article in the Declaration of Rights provided that "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion,

21. Quarterly, Series 1 Volume 27, 222.

22. Matthew Page Andrews Virginia The Old Dominion (Richmond, 1949), 325. Quarterly, Series 1 Volume 16, 61.

according to the dictate of conscience."²³ As a member of the General Assembly, Page tried to prevent the erosion of the privileges enjoyed by his denomination. They included compulsory attendance at services, regulation of nonconformists, what of glebe lands, and what of tithes for ministers' salaries.

In 1785, the question of religious equality in Virginia was finally resolved with the passage of Thomas Jefferson's Bill of Religious Freedom, by which the church and the state were separated.²⁴ When this bill came to the floor in the General Assembly, Page was one of the few delegates who voted against it.²⁵ Page's alternate proposal was for a general assessment to support all churches, an idea shared by others such as Patrick Henry, Richard Bland Lee, and Edmund Randolph. These men felt that religion would be damaged if the people were not required to support some church. In August, 1785, Page wrote to Jefferson explaining how he felt about compulsory support of a church, explaining that the legislature had "endeavored eight years in vain to support the rational sects by voluntary contributions."²⁶

Page's ideas on religion and government were set forth

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23. Hamilton Eckenrode, The Separation of Church and State in Virginia (Richmond, 1910), 44.
 24. The complete separation of church and state occurred 1802 when the General Assembly provided for the sale of the glebes.
 25. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia 1781 - 1785 (Richmond, 1828), December 1785, 96.
 26. Kate Roland, The Life of George Mason (New York, 1892), 90.

in an address to his constituents in 1797. He wrote:

"For my part I am so perfectly convinced that a free government cannot flourish or perhaps even exist without a general belief in revealed religion, and a high sense of moral obligations, that it is a great measure on this account I prefer the republican to a monarchical government for it must in times establish pure and uncorrupted religion without the aid of laws; it will be the indispensable duty of every friend of liberty, to cherish virtuos and religious sentiments without which his favorite government cannot exist."27

Page was a delegate to the first Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia which met in May 1785 at Richmond. The purpose of this Convention was to draw up a constitution for the Virginia church and to appoint deputies to attend the General Convention at Philadelphia. Page and Dr. David Griffin were selected. The purpose of the Philadelphia Convention was to transform the Church of England into the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Sixteen clergy and twenty-six laymen, representing New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina were present. The two major concerns of the convention were the preparation of a general ecclesiastical constitution and the modification of the liturgy of the Anglican Church to meet the changes

27. John Page, An Address to the Citizens of the District of York, 22.

occasioned by the American Revolution and the disestablishment.²⁸

In Philadelphia, Page was appointed to the committee which was to adapt the service. All references to the King or Queen of England were removed, but members of the committee made no further alterations in the liturgy other than those necessitated by Independence. Page did not completely agree with this position, and introduced a short proposal that he had written to replace the first four petitions of the Litany. When the committee rejected his proposal, Page appealed to the General Convention, but without success. Bishop William White described the incident thusly:

"The mover declared, that he had no objection to the invoking of our blessed Savior, whose divinity the prayer acknowledged, and whom he considered as invoked through the whole of the Litany which, he thought might be defended by Scripture. The objection lay to the word 'Trinity', which he remarked to be unauthorized by Scripture, and a foundation of much unnecessary disputation. But he said, that the leaving out of the fourth petition only, in which the word occurred, would leave the other petitions liable to the charge of acknowledging three Gods; and therefore he moved to strike out the whole. The Reverend Dr. West, of Baltimore, answered Mr. Page. Perhaps much more would have been said but during Dr. West's speech, it was whispered about, that there was no use going into such a controversy

28. Francis Hawks, Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States, (New York, 1836) Volume 1, 187.

that Mr. Page had made the motion, merely to preserve consistency of conduct; that he had attempted the same thing in sub-committee, and well knew, from what had passed, that there was no prospect of success, but that he could not dispense with the bringing of the question before the body. Accordingly, as soon as Dr. West had finished it was put and lost without division.²⁹

Page was a member of the Second Episcopal Convention that met in Richmond in May, 1786. This Convention ratified the constitution written in Philadelphia in 1785. During this Convention, Page was appointed to a committee to write a petition to the General Assembly protesting the repeal of the Incorporation Act, which reserved the property of the Established Church for the newly organized Episcopal Church.³⁰ Page was also appointed to the standing committee to defend the rights and privileges of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the General Assembly.³¹

Because Page was devoted to and worked tirelessly for the Protestant Episcopal Church, it was proposed that Page become the first Bishop of Virginia. Page would not have accepted the offer, if it had been made by the Convention.

Like many of the Virginia gentlemen, Page had interest in many fields. Religion, politics, and science occupied his free time, but like many other planters, Page had to

29. William White, Memories of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, (New York, 1880), 116 - 117.

30. Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, 116.

31. Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, 126.

devote enormous amounts of time and energy to maintaining his plantation. Each year as the cash crop of tobacco worsened, he had less time to spend in other areas. In order to serve his country and state, as well as help maintain his "Rosewell", Page increasingly devoted more time to politics and it was in this field that he made his greatest contributions.

Chapter V

Conclusion

John Page's life touched many of the important movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. He worked on some of the most exciting problems of that age and he knew some of the outstanding people of the time. Whether in public or private life, John Page was popular with his contemporaries. He was one of those people who, because of his personality and generosity, was free from personal attacks, even by those who were of a different set of values. Edmund Randolph wrote, "Page had a virtue and felicity... to enjoy the confidence of every good man, and to be respected even by the bad. . . ."1

Jefferson, Page's friend wrote:

From his youth, a man of pure and unblemished life. He was a patriot, a statesman, a philosopher, and a Christian. From the commencement of the American Revolution to the last hour of his life, he exhibited a firm, inflexible, unremitting, ardent attachment to his country, and rendered her very important services. His conduct was marked by uprightness in all vicissitudes of life - in the prosperous and calamitous times through which he passed - in seasons of gladness and of affliction.²

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1. Edmund Randolph "Essay on the Revolutionary History of Virginia 1774 - 1782" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Volume XLIV (April, 1936) 107.
 2. R. C. M. Page, Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia (New York, 1893) 76.

There is no one single action or event that can be attributed to John Page as his most outstanding contribution, but his life points to two facts; first, he was well-loved man and second, he did all within his power to help establish the new order for his state and country.

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Autobiography

I am the second son of Thomas Wetmore and Virginia Page Harrison. I was born on July 2, 1949 in Middlebury, Vermont. Since my father was in the service and later worked for the Federal government my secondary education was varied. I matriculated at the Virginia Military Institute in August, 1968 and graduated with a B. A. in History in May, 1972. Upon graduation I secured a teaching position in History at Cumberland High School, Cumberland County. After my first year teaching I entered the Master's program at Longwood College. The classes I took included Virginia History, Modern German, Constitutional, and Colonial. At present I teach reading at Cumberland High School but in the near future I plan to move to college teaching.