

“This Dangerous Fire”: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Jefferson and the Challenge of the Virginia Militia, 1780-1781*

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From his army's South Carolina bivouac along the upper Pee Dee River, the new Continental commander of the Southern Department, Major General Nathanael Greene, penned a lengthy letter on 10 January 1781 to his old friend Alexander Hamilton, with whom he had previously served in the northern theatre. Greene reported the numerous problems he faced in “keeping shoals of Militia on foot.”¹ While he acknowledged the efficacy of some mounted militia units, Greene lamented that “the rest of the Militia are calculated [more] to destroy provisions than oppose the Enemy. . . .” This revealing letter epitomizes the general's persistent complaint of “the folly of employing Militia” during his trying tenure as Continental commander in the southern states during the latter years of the war. This was particularly true regarding the unceasing attempts by Greene and Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson to exploit the Old Dominion's manpower resources in 1780 and 1781.²

Scholars have detailed the weaknesses of inexperienced, poorly equipped militia companies in battles against British regulars, as well as the chaos that resulted in the South when traditional norms surrounding violence broke down.³ Fewer studies, however, have detailed the larger challenge faced by General Greene and other local, state, and Continental officers throughout the war in the South: raising, equipping and keeping militia units in the field in a manner helpful to the American prosecution of the war. Although numerous contemporaries disparaged the militia for its many limitations, senior officers in the South were dependent on it to wage the war. American commanders largely solved the problem of militia ineffectiveness and cowardice on the battlefield as early as 1781, by increasing the use of militia units as partisans and auxiliaries, and by innovative tactical deployments of these troops. Yet the problems of getting county militia organizations to report for duty, clothing and arming them, moving them to the main armies, and keeping them in the field for their assigned terms of service were all formidable challenges that revolutionaries in Virginia were never effectively able to surmount. Perhaps the greatest of these difficulties was to get militia men to turn out at all.

In their attempts to field a force to repel British invasions in 1780 and 1781, political and military leaders faced numerous incidents in which militia companies failed to assemble as ordered, reported for service with a fraction of their strength, rioted over draft laws, and refused outright to participate in the Revolutionary struggle. These men were not loyalists, but part of what historian John Shy called “the great middle group of Americans. . . people who were dubious, afraid, uncertain, indecisive, many of whom felt that there was nothing at stake that could justify involving themselves and their families in extreme hazard and suffering.” The existence and magnitude of this class of people can be seen by the overt insurgence of militiamen and “disaffection” of the people Greene and Jefferson faced late in the war.⁴

As civilian and military leaders alike wrestled with a number of problems related to raising militia units in Virginia as the war in the South intensified, often their largest concern was getting men to mobilize at all. “O that we had in the field[,] as Henry the Fifth said, some few of the many thousands that are Idle at Home,” Greene wrote to a subordinate.⁵ This failure of militia regiments to mobilize had a profound effect on military operations. “The tardiness of the people puts it out of my power to attempt anything great,” Greene concluded in a typical letter. While officers, legislatures, and governors could call out militia regiments and institute drafts, many factors conspired against them in their efforts to deliver men to the patriot army.⁶

Whig militiamen worried about the safety of their families during times of enemy incursions, which led many to ignore calls to turn out for military service. Greene was troubled by reluctant militiamen as Lord Cornwallis began his invasion of North Carolina. “The people have been so harassed for eight months past and their domestick matters are in such distress that they will not leave home,” he reported to Congress, “and if they do it is for so short a time that they are of no use.” Indian threats in western regions dissuaded many “Mountain Men” from marching toward Greene “until the apprehensions of danger. . . may in some measure be removed.” British commanders also recognized that minor offensives in various parts of the South assisted Cornwallis’ main thrust against Greene by “obliging the Militia to return to take care of their own property.”⁷

In addition to concerns about family safety, men frequently avoided militia service during seasons of pressing agricultural demands. Jefferson recognized such considerations but clamored for militia units or draftees

nonetheless. "It seems vain to plant and sow and leave the Enemy unopposed to reap," he warned a militia officer, adding that he hoped neighbors would help plant the crops of those men called away. Rockbridge County's militia commander complained to Jefferson in April 1781 that if his men went to join Greene "they will not be able to Raise Spring Crops, and therefore their families and Stocks must suffer, as they (Mostly) have not a person behind them when they are gone from home to work their Small farms." Charlotte County's men objected to a tour of service the following month, "alleging they Can't Cultivate their plantations for even a prospect of bread the ensuing Year."⁸ Jefferson was plagued with reports like these that spring from numerous counties in his state.⁹

In a number of instances, Virginia militia officers attempted to persuade Jefferson to alter the terms of their counties' service. Several officers of Berkeley petitioned to have their county's call-up rescinded altogether in favor of a plan to enlist volunteers for service. Rockbridge's militia commander wrote to the governor to report the dissatisfaction among his men. "They. . . are of the opinion," he reported in April 1781, "If your Excellency and Council knew the Duty this County has done since last October you would Excuse them at this time and call men from the Counties which have done less." A request to suspend the militia draft in Gloucester County "in consequence of our exposed position" came to Jefferson in May. After receiving a plea from Charlotte County to reduce the number of militia expected in early 1781 due to previous service given by their men, Jefferson gave in. "Send all able to do Duty who have not performed their Tour, and all Delinquents, with which we shall be satisfied," he wrote to the county's enlistment officer.¹⁰

The Virginia Executive received so many appeals from county militia officers to suspend the draft or to avoid militia service that he was compelled to respond with what must have been extreme exasperation. "Of the eleven counties called on" for militia tours in the spring of 1781, Jefferson wrote to Richmond County's commander, "seven have applied to be excused. You will immediately see Sir what would be the consequence of complying with their request."¹¹ The governor refused to accede to this last appeal, but he was not always at a luxury to do so. On March 1st, 1781, Jefferson ordered New Kent County to provide 104 militia men for immediate service. Eight days later he received word that "out of 104 Men ordered [for militia service] from the County of New Kent, only 28 could be prevailed upon to set off, and of these perhaps one half will desert before they reach the place of destination. The reason they assign to their refusal is that

many others have deserted with impunity and until those are punished they will do no duty." That day, the New Kent contingent arrived in Williamsburg with only twelve men. Jefferson received a lengthy explanation for the poor turnout from one of that county's officers, who observed that "the defect in not sending down the full number required of us does not arise from any disaffection." With few alternatives, Jefferson had to turn to other counties to make up New Kent deficiencies.¹²

Perhaps the most portentous and potentially fatal source of dereliction of duty on the part of militiamen was their disaffection from the Revolutionary cause. Modern historians have distinguished between the thousands of committed Loyalists from the Carolinas and Virginia, many of whom shouldered muskets in the service of the Crown, and the "solid, respectable men who differed from the rest in little but their disaffection."¹³ Acts of disaffection late in the war included violence against Whigs, disobedience to mobilization orders, rioting, and what officials regarded as insurrection. These displays were different than joining provincial regiments or Tory bands, yet no less dangerous to the Revolutionary movement. This hostility toward and estrangement from Whig political and military objectives and demands translated into severe manpower problems for southern revolutionaries in their struggle against the British late in the war.

Disaffection was a problem for southern patriots from the beginning of the conflict.¹⁴ In Virginia, discontent with the war began as early as 1777, particularly in the backcountry. By 1780, however, the British invasion of the Carolinas brought forth disaffection on a larger scale, as military needs imposed ever-growing demands on reluctant rebels and the British threat distracted state authorities from quelling discontent.¹⁵

Historian Emory Evans has recently concluded that "the Revolutionary movement created considerable unrest in Virginia between 1776 and 1781, some of it far more serious than simple protests against draft laws, military service, and taxes." While Evans concentrates on counties in Southwest Virginia, discontent, disturbances, and revolts occurred throughout the state in 1780 and 1781, facts which impaired the state's ability to utilize its manpower for war.¹⁶

On October 27, 1780, Thomas Jefferson sent a disturbing message to the Virginia delegates of the Continental Congress, alerting them that a

very dangerous Insurrection in Pittsylvania was prevented a few days ago by being discovered three days before it was to take place. The Ringleaders were seized in their Beds. This dangerous fire is only smothered: When it will break out seems to depend altogether on events. It extends from Montgomery County along our Southern boundary to Pittsylvania and eastward as far as the James River. Indeed some suspicions have been raised of its having crept as far a Culpeper.¹⁷

Alarms became all too common for Revolutionary authorities in Virginia with the success of British arms in the Carolinas and Tidewater Virginia. Bedford County was the scene of a disturbance in 1781 by a number of “conspirators” with a “disposition to become hostile.” Local authorities were able to quell the unrest before it became general.¹⁸ Many citizens in the Portsmouth area opposed the Revolution, though they were reluctant to join British ranks for fear of reprisals in the absence of red-coated troops.¹⁹ Jefferson wrote of a “disaffection which has been lately discovered in the middle country” in 1780, presumably the Piedmont, and later of the same discord in the southern part of Virginia.²⁰ Montgomery County, in the western part of the state, was so disaffected that Jefferson feared the Kings Mountain prisoners could not be kept there for fear of their liberation by local sympathizers. The next spring in that county, “nearly one half of our militia are disaffected, and therefore cannot be drawn into the service by threats or otherwise,” William Preston advised the governor.²¹

By late spring, 1781, disaffection interfered with militia service to such an extent that Jefferson sought legislative remedies “to enforce the calls of the executive for militia to attend in the field. Whether deficiencies of which we have had reason to complain proceed from any backwardness of militia themselves or from a want of activity in their principal officers,” he noted, “I do not undertake to decide.”²² In March 1781 a Virginian wrote of an expected reinforcement expected by General Greene from Washington County, Virginia. It never materialized, “whether to attribute it to disaffection or some other cause I know not, but every obstacle was by the County Lieutenant thrown in the way to prevent the men coming.”²³ Private citizens also sought to advise the Virginia General Assembly of discord within the state. Several petitioners notified the House in May 1781 that “nothing is so likely to break the Spirit of the Body of the People, and dispose them tamely to the British yoke” than large drafts of militia, “especially in Seed Time and Harvest.”²⁴

As these petitioners recognized, the most bitter resentment against serving in the field was caused by the drafting of militia late in the war. Drafted men were likely to serve for extended periods of time, far from home and without their neighbors, as would be the case in a routine militia tour. Furthermore, those drafted would serve individually in Continental battalions, or in state regiments for lengthy service periods.²⁵ A number of incidents transpired in Virginia in which disaffected citizens disrupted or prevented the draft from taking place, notably in 1781. Bedford County's militia commander failed to carry out the draft in his county for fear that it would cause an uproar among the people.²⁶ In May 1781 a Virginian reported that "those mutinous rascals in Augusta and Rockbridge amount to a majority, a *great* majority in Augusta!"²⁷ In those two western counties, "the people seem much aversed to" the draft, though an officer at Staunton did not think these citizens constituted a majority. Nonetheless, a considerable number of them "in a very bold and daring manner" seized the official draft papers and destroyed them to prevent involuntary service by the militia.²⁸ In late April, a crowd "much out of humour" prevented Augusta County officials from proceeding with the draft. The men reportedly acknowledged a willingness to defend their country, "yet they would suffer death before they would be drafted 18 months from their families and made regular soldiers of."²⁹ Hearing of this nearby event, Rockbridge militiamen rioted shortly thereafter to prevent the institution of the draft there. They "got into the Court House[,] Seased the table, carried it off in a Roiatous manner," and advised their officers they "would not be drafted for Eighteen Months and be regulars."³⁰

In the northwestern counties of Frederick, Berkeley, and Hampshire, numerous inhabitants were alienated from the Revolution in the spring of 1781. Berkeley men petitioned the state legislature to have recruits from the militia be volunteers instead of draftees, but this was ignored.³¹ Citizens and militia troops rioted in Hampshire over the draft act, prevented tax collections, and harbored deserters in their midst. "Their principal object," a resident informed Jefferson, "is to be clear of Taxes and Draughts."³² Of these riots, the governor responded that "Laws made by common consent must not be trampled on by Individuals. It is very much the interest of the good to force the unworthy into their due Share of Contributions to the Public Support, otherwise the burthen on them will become oppressive indeed. . . ."³³ Prior to these riots, the militia companies of Frederick, Berkeley, and Hampshire refused to serve in the western theatre. Colonel George Rogers Clark, for whose trans-Allegheny operations the militia was intended, wrote bitterly

that “the Militia of those counties would have marched with cheerfulness had they not been encouraged to the Contrary” by their officers.³⁴

In the eastern counties of Virginia, rioters also protested the draft. The county lieutenant of Northampton resigned his commission in 1781 in opposition to drafting militia soldiers, a process he deemed “inconsistent with Liberty and Free Government.”³⁵ In December 1780 Lancaster County rioters disarmed the officer responsible for drafting its militia, “and took from me the papers relative to the draft which prevented my carrying it on.” Although this officer held a court martial to condemn those responsible for the outrages, he was powerless to capture those responsible.³⁶ In April 1781 over two hundred men in Accomack “armed with Clubs” gathered at the courthouse to prevent the completion of the draft, which was affected by stealing the militia list from the county clerk. Several days later the same mob took over the courthouse “armed with clubs, swords, guns and pistols. . . [and] all unanimously declared they were determined to oppose the Draft at the hazard of their lives.” These events, a witness reported, “have thrown the County into the greatest confusion imaginable. People begin to publish, propagat[e] and avow the most dangerous doctrines, sentiments and opinions.”³⁷

For Nathanael Greene, Thomas Jefferson, and other Revolutionary leaders, the use of militia units to defend the southern states posed particular problems, though most of them grudgingly recognized the militia were indispensable in the Southern Department. Part of Greene’s military genius was his ability to employ his militia tactically in such a way as to take advantage of its strengths. The flaws of southern militia regiments, however—short enlistments, wastefulness, a lack of arms and accoutrements, desertions, etc.—were problems deeply rooted in the widespread disaffection that existed in the South. No southern civil official or military officer was able to resolve completely this dual concern—manpower and disaffection toward the Revolution—which was cyclical in nature. Without the approbation of the people, revolutionaries could not count on adequate militia support; without a substantial militia force in the field, patriot forces could not resist the enemy long enough to assure Whig leaders of the support of the citizenry. Greene captured the essence of the problem in a brief letter to Washington in late June 1781. “I shall keep the peoples’ hopes alive,” Greene assured his commander, “but what shall I do without men?”³⁸

NOTES

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1. Nathanael Greene to Alexander Hamilton, 10 January 1781, Richard K. Showman, et. al., editors, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, published for the Rhode Island Historical Society, 1976-) 7:87-91. Greene referred to the surrender of Charleston on May 12, 1780 and the defeat of Major General Horatio Gates by British forces on August 16, 1780 a few miles north of Camden, South Carolina.

2. Ibid. His reference to Sumter, Marion and Clarke refers to militia commanders Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion of South Carolina and Elijah Clarke of Georgia.

3. One need only look at the rebel disaster at Camden in August of 1780, to support this conclusion, shared by numerous contemporaries. Probably the best account of this battle and the campaign that led up to it is the narrative of Lt. Col. Otho Holland Williams of the Maryland Line, in W. Gilmore Simms, *The Life of Nathanael Greene: Major-General in the Army of the Revolution* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), 359-83. Williams was a participant in the battle. The most recent and thought-provoking book to detail the breakdown of societal norms in the context of Revolutionary militia deployment is Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001). See also Harry M. Ward, *Between the Lines: Banditti of the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002.)

4. John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 235-36; Thomas C. Barrow, "The American Revolution as a Colonial War for Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 25 (July, 1968): 459. Disaffection during the war has been discussed most notably in Ronald Hoffman, "The Disaffected in the Revolutionary South," in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 273-316; Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.); Ronald Hoffman, Thad Tate and Peter J. Albert, eds. *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1985). See also: Jeffrey J. Crow, "Liberty Men and Loyalists: Disorder and Disaffection in the North Carolina Backcountry," 125-78; "Whig Authority and Public Order in Backcountry North Carolina, 1776-1783," 99-124; Emory G. Evans, "Trouble in the Backcountry: Disaffection in Southwest Virginia during the American Revolution," 179-212; Michael A. McDonnell, "Resistance to the American Revolution," in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 342-51. McDonnell's essay on this volume is an excellent overview.

5. Greene to Steuben, 3 February 1781, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 7:243.

6. Greene to Samuel Huntington, 5 May 1781, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 8:206-207; Greene to Joseph Reed, 4 May 1781, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 8:201.

7. Greene to Samuel Huntington, 31 January 1781, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 7:225; Col. Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, 7 February 1781, William P. Palmer, ed., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from April 1, 1781 to Decem-*

ber 31, 1781, (Richmond: Sherwin McRae and the Virginia State Library, 1881), 1:494; Col. Arthur Campbell to Jefferson, 4 June 1781, Julian P. Boyd, ed. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951-), 6:80; William Preston to Jefferson, 13 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:436; Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, 7 March 1781, Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina* (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1899-), 17:990.

8. Jefferson to James Callaway, 16 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:464; Samuel McDowell to Jefferson, 20 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:507; Edmund Pendleton to Jefferson, 20 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:191; Thomas Read, 4 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:345.

9. William Preston to Jefferson, 10 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:398; James Callaway to Jefferson, to Jefferson, 11 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:402-3; James Slaughter to Jefferson, 11 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:407-8; William Call to Jefferson, 14 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:441-42; George Skillern to Jefferson, 14 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:449-50.

10. Col. Phillip Pendleton and others to Jefferson, 25 January 1781, *Virginia State Papers*, 1:461; Jefferson to Thomas Read, 10 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:400; Samuel McDowell to Jefferson, 20 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:507; Sir John Peyton to Jefferson, 3 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:596.

11. Jefferson to Abraham Penn, 4 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:598.

12. Jefferson to the County Lieutenants of Prince George and other Counties, 1 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:32; John Walker to Jefferson, 8 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:101-2; Steuben to Jefferson, 9 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:106; William Clayton to Jefferson, 16 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:154-55; Jefferson to Steuben, 10 March 1781, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:119; Charles Dabney, 23 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:214. By March 23rd, four of the New Kent officers had deserted along with most of the men.

13. Evans, "Trouble in the Backcountry," 212; Ekirch, "Whig Authority and Public Order in Backcountry North Carolina, 1776-1783," 99-100. Early 20th century historian H.J. Eckenrode described the unrest in Virginia, and by extension the rest of the southern states, as a problem of "discontent, malingering, and actual disaffection." These may be distinctions without difference. Eckenrode, *The Revolution in Virginia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), 174. Jeffrey Crow, however, writes that Loyalists included those who ignored, accommodated themselves to, or resisted "the onerous demands of a Revolutionary government," not only those who "loved the crown, upheld its rule, and abhorred the threat to good order and government posed by the Revolutionaries, though loyalists of that stripe could be found throughout the colonies." Crow, "Liberty Men and Loyalist," 127. Curiously, John E. Selby writes very little on disaffection in *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775-1783* (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1998). See also McDonnell, "Resistance to the American Revolution," 342-51.

14. The uprising of Highland Scots in the Cape Fear region in 1776, which culminated in their defeat at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, is a well-known episode of hostility toward the Revolution in North Carolina, as was the 1777 Llewellyn Conspiracy in North Carolina. Hugh F. Rankin, "The Moore's Creek Bridge Campaign, 1776." *North Carolina Historical Review* 30 (January 1953): 23-60. Jeffrey J. Crow, "Tory Plots and Anglican Loyalty: The Llewellyn Conspiracy of 1777," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 55 (January 1978): 1-17. See also Laura Page Frech, "The Wilmington Committee of Public Safety and the Loyalist Rising of February 1776," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 41 (January 1964): 1-20.

15. Eckenrode, *The Revolution in Virginia*, 232-37; Evans, "Trouble in the Backcoun-

try," 179-84; Hoffman, "The Disaffected in the Revolutionary South," 277, 292-93.

16. Evans, "Trouble in the Backcountry," 179. Evans concentrates on Montgomery County.

17. Eckenrode, *The Revolution in Virginia*, 237. This near rebellion coincided with the nearby Surry County, N.C. disturbances.

18. James Callaway to Jefferson, 23 March 1780, *Virginia State Papers*, 1:590.

19. Brigadier Gen. Benedict Arnold to Sir Henry Clinton, 23 January 1781, Clark, *State Records of North Carolina*, 17:983.

20. Jefferson to James Wood, 1 November 1780, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 4:88, 92.

21. Jefferson to Huntington, 7 November 1780, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 4:98; William Preston to Jefferson, 13 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:436-38

22. Jefferson to the House of Delegates, 28 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 6:28.

23. Magill to Jefferson, 5 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 6:63.

24. "Petition of Robert Poage and Others to the General Assembly..." Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 6:57. Boyd gives no date for the petition but implies late May 1781.

25. For more details on the draft in the southern states in 1780 and 1781, see Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Continental Army* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1989), 153-65; *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 6:487n; and McBride, "The Virginia War Effort," 111. North Carolina had enacted a militia draft in 1777, and allowed draftees to be used for service as determined by Congress. See Clark, *State Records of North Carolina*, 24:128-29 for the law.

26. James Callaway to Jefferson, 23 March 1781, *Virginia State Papers*, 1:590.

27. Samuel Patterson to William Davies, 27 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 6:23.

28. Maj. Thomas Posey to William Davies, 18 May 1781, *Virginia State Papers*, 2:107-8.

29. Col. George Moffett to Jefferson, 5 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:603-604. As late as May 1782, Augusta citizens petitioned the legislature in protest against the draft. See Legislative petition, Citizens of Augusta County, 30 May 1782, Library of Virginia, Reel 12, Box 15, Folder 34.

30. Samuel McDowell to Jefferson, 9 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:621-22.

31. Legislative petition, Citizens of Berkeley County, 7 March 1781, Library of Virginia, Reel 19, Box 26, Folder 20.

32. Garret Van Meter to Jefferson, 11 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:409-10; Garret Van Meter to Jefferson, 14 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:409-10; Garret Van Meter to Jefferson, 20 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:513-14.

33. Jefferson to Garret Van Meter, 27 April 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:565-67.

34. George Rogers Clark to Jefferson, 27 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:253. The insurrection was eventually put down by a militia force under General Daniel Morgan. Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 160.

35. Isaac Avery to Jefferson, 16 March 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 5:153.

36. John Taylor to Jefferson, 5 March 1780, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 4:180-1.

37. James Arbuckle and others to Jefferson, 15 May 1781, *Virginia State Papers*, 2:97-99. For another description of the Accomack riots, see George Corbin to Jefferson, 31 May 1781, Boyd, *Jefferson's Papers*, 6:44-46.

38. Greene to Washington, 23.

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