



AND
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No. 311.

From the Enquirer.

Vindication

OF MR. JEFFERSON.

No. 11.

First approach of the enemy to Richmond.

Col. Wm. Tatham, says: "Being at Richmond in the time of Arnold's invasion 1780-1, and hearing that an express had arrived at the Governor's with intelligence of the approach of an invading enemy, immediately rode to his house, and met Governor JEFFERSON walking out. He had received such an express, but, as other intelligence led him to suppose they were nothing more than a foraging party, unless he had further information to justify the measure, he should not disturb the country by calling out the Militia: he would thank me nevertheless, if I would go down to the Maj. Gen. Steuben who was at Wilton, (six miles below Richmond) and receive his orders if needful. The Baron dispatched me to General Nelson at Williamsburg, where I found the town in confusion, expecting an immediate attack; the enemy being at anchor, and having a boat taking the soundings towards the shore, at King's Mill, (4 miles below Williamsburg.)

"They proceeded however, up the river, and I remained in the suit of General Nelson several days, when I was desired by him to be the bearer of some dispatches to the Governor, of such importance, that I must avoid all risk of being taken. Knowing the country well, I ventured in among the plantations, until I got to that of Dr. Tuckhart, near the Meadow Bridges, on Chickahominy; I learnt that the enemy's picket was just called in, and retired from the Bridges towards the main body at Richmond. I followed the picket carefully, entered Mr. Duval's house, at Mount Comfort, while the floors were wet with liquors spilt by the British soldiers, and pushed into Richmond, from whence the army had first retreated. Here one of our well affected citizens (I think old Richard Crutch) referred me to Moses Fredman, in Manchester, who conducted me to Mr. Jefferson, at a house then occupied by Doctor Evans, and here I delivered my dispatch, and spent part of the evening. I understood the enemy encamped that night at Four Mile creek, about 10 or 12 miles off, and were then on their retreat."

In 1796, Mr. D. Hylton, before Doctor Wm. Foushee, (a person qualified to administer an oath) made the following deposition:

Henrico County.

"That in 1781 when Arnold invaded this place, I was living near the Foundry at Westham; that I was going out to join the Militia to oppose Arnold, when I was stop'd by Mr. Jefferson, then Governor of the State, and requested by him to attend to the removal of the powder, ammunition, arms and other property belonging to the public, then in the magazine near Westham: that his orders were to have every thing removed with all possible expedition across the river; that on the night preceding Arnold's arrival at the foundry, Mr. Jefferson was at the subscriber's house, as late as eleven or twelve o'clock at night, attending and giving directions about the public property; that he then said he should go up the river about 8 miles to his family, cross the next morning, and come down to Wilton's, opposite Westham, and that carriages, &c. should be provided to take off the property: that this was done; that a very considerable quantity (I suppose about fifteen tons) of Gunpowder and ammunition, with a num-

ber of arms, stores, &c. were transported as directed and thereby saved to the public; that the enemy were so close to us, that I was obliged to have about three hundred stand of arms thrown into the river, the greater part of which were afterwards recovered, that in the night preceding the day of invasion, the waggons (driven by white men) employed to bring records, &c. from Richmond, by mistake attempted to get to the Magazine, instead of the landing on the river, and near the Magazine, overset and broke some arms, &c. That in consequence of this accident, the packages which I afterwards found contained records were lodged at the Magazine, and carriages could not be procured in time for the removal, as the alarm was so great and sudden, that almost every person in the neighbourhood, was endeavouring to put his property in a state of safety by removing it; that it then and ever has appeared to the subscriber, that the said Mr. Jefferson did every thing which the nature of the case and his situation would admit for the public interest."

(Signed) D. HYLTON.

Such are the asseverations of a man, which no individual acquainted with his character will dare to deny.

James Currie, of Richmond, well known for his talents as a Physician, and his uniform candour as a man; thus expresses himself:

"On application made to me, if I recollect any thing in regard to the loss of the public records and other valuable papers in the year 1781, during the invasion of the British army when Mr. Jefferson was Governor, I well remember that he appeared extremely anxious and very active, in having them removed from Richmond, and deposited in a place of safety, and if possible, entirely out of the reach of the enemy; and for that and other duties of his office as Chief Magistrate, did remain in town fully as long, as was either proper or prudent for him so to do, without manifest danger of becoming the prisoner of the invading army, who were fast approaching the seat of government, without any efficient force that could at that time be brought against them to stop their march; and that his conduct was then perfectly proper, and that of a real patriot and friend of his country, will be very fully evinced, by the concurrent voice of the gentlemen who then acted with him in Council, as well as the unanimous approving voice of the Virginia Legislature, at the subsequent meeting of Assembly of the state."

A similar request being made of a Mr. A. B. late Clerk of the Council, a gentleman of the fairest character, he made the following statement:

"I well remember that Mr. Jefferson was extremely active in removing all public records from Richmond, and I have reason to believe the chief loss was occasioned by a mistake of the waggons conveying them to the foundry of Westham, where they were to have been thrown over the river, if pursued by the enemy; Mr. Jefferson desired me as Clerk of the Council to continue with him, and to take with me the public seal, and such papers as might be immediately wanted. I accordingly procured a servant and horse, to carry a small trunk containing the papers, and on the afternoon preceding Arnold's taking possession of Richmond, Mr. Jefferson desired me to proceed to Tuckahoe, where he could come to me. I set out at Sun set, and left Mr. Jefferson busy in getting off the records."

(Signed) A. BLAIR.

Oct. 12, 1781.

Mr. John Beckley who was then Clerk to the Virginia Legislature and at this time Clerk to Congress, has authorised me in his name to make the following statement:

"In four days from the arrival of Arnold's fleet, he proceeded 150 miles up the river, and landed his troops in 24 miles of Richmond. The night before his march to that place, all the militia of the State, which could be armed, being then out under the command of Gen. Nelson, in the neighbourhood of Williamsburgh, and no defence at hand for the security of Richmond but about 200 half armed Militia, under the command of Baron Steuben, who could do nothing more than cover the removal of the records, and militia stores across James River, from Richmond to Manchester, and secure the boats and batteries on the Manchester side, to prevent the enemy's passage. He remained in Richmond, with the last detachment of militia, that passed the river with records and stores, and until the enemy the next morning were entering the lower part of the town, and began to flank it with their light horse. He saw Mr. Jefferson the night before, issuing his orders, and using every exertion to remove the records and stores: he afterwards saw him at Westham, five miles above Richmond, when Arnold pushed a detachment to destroy the stores, at that place, and which through Mr. J's exertions were almost entirely saved. After the British evacuated Richmond, on his return the first man he met with was Mr. Jefferson."

In addition to the testimony already cited, we may consider the following letter to Mr. Huntington the President of Congress, dated Richmond, January 20th, 1781, as an authentic source of intelligence, because it was written at a time when the circumstances were fresh in the recollection of every observer, and because it was addressed to a body intimately informed on the subject by innumerable means, and who would not have failed to have exposed the slightest attempt made to deceive them at a crisis so important, and by a man of such elevated standing.

SIR,

"It may seem odd, considering the important events which have taken place in this state within the course of ten days past, that I should not have transmitted an account of them to your Excellency sooner. But such has been their extraordinary rapidity, and such the unremitting attention they have required from all concerned in the government, that I do not recollect the portion of time which I could have taken to commit them to paper. On the 31st of December a letter from a private gentleman to Gen. Nelson, came to my hands, notifying that in the morning of the preceding day, 27th, six vessels entered the Capes, and from the tenor of the letter, we had reason to expect, within a few hours, further intelligence whether they were friends or foes, their force and other circumstances. We immediately dispatched General Nelson to the lower country, with powers to call on the militia in that quarter, or act otherwise as exigencies should require: but waited further intelligence before we would call for militia from the middle or upper country. No further intelligence came until the 2nd of (January) instant, when the former was confirmed. It was ascertained they had advanced up James River to Warraqueak Bay. All arrangements were immediately taken for calling in a sufficient body of militia for opposition; in the night of the 3rd, we received advice, they were at anchor opposite James town. We then suppo-

sed Williamsburg to be their object. The wind, however, which had hitherto been unfavourable, shifted fair, and the tide being also in their favour, they ascended the river to Kennon's that evening, and with the next tide came up to Westover; having on their way taken possession of some works we had at Hoods, by which two or three of their vessels received some damage, but which were of necessity abandoned by the small garrison of 50 men placed there on the enemy's landing to invest the works. Intelligence of their having quitted the station at James town, from which we supposed, they meant to land for Williamsburg, and that they had in the evening to Cannon's, reached us the next morning at 5 o'clock, and was the first indication of their meaning to penetrate towards this place or Petersburg. As the orders for drawing the militia here had been given but two days, no opposition was in readiness. Every effort was therefore necessary to withdraw the arms and other military stores, records, &c. from this place. Every effort was accordingly made to convey them to the foundry six miles above this, till about sun set of that day, when we learnt the enemy had come to an anchor at Westover that morning. We then knew this and not Petersburg was their object, and we began to carry across the river many things remaining here, and to remove what had been transported to the foundry and Laboratory, to Westham the nearest crossing seven miles above this place; which operation continued till they had approached very near. They marched from Westover at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the fourth, and entered Richmond the day following. A regiment of infantry, and about 30 horse, continued without halting to the foundry; the parat that, the Boring Mill, Magazine, and two other houses, and proceeded to Westham, but nothing being in their power, there, they retired to Richmond; the next morning they burnt some buildings of public, and some of private property, with what stores remained in them; destroyed a great quantity of private stores, and about 12 o'clock retired towards Westover, when they encamped within the neck the next day. The loss is not accurately known. As far as I have been able to discover, it consisted, in this place of about 300 muskets, some soldier's clothing to a small amount, some quarter master stores, of which 120 sides of Leather was the principal article, part of the artificers tools, and three waggons; besides which, five brass 4 lbs. which we sunk in the river were discovered to them, raised and carried off. Within 48 hours from the time of their landing, and 19 from our knowing their destination, they had penetrated 33 miles, done the whole in jury and retired.

"Their numbers from the best intelligence I have had, are about 1500 infantry, and as to their cavalry, accounts vary from 50 to 320, the whole commanded by the paricide Arnold; our militia, dispersed over a large tract of country can be called in but slowly. On the day the enemy advanced to this place, two hundred only were embodied: they were of this town and its neighbourhood, and were too few, to do any thing. At this time, they are assembled in pretty considerable bodies, on the south side of James river, but not yet brought to a point. On the north side, are two or three small bodies amounting in the whole to about nine hundred men. The enemy were at 4 o'clock yesterday evening still remaining in their encampment, at Westover, at Berkeley Neck. In the mean time, Baron Steuben, a zealous friend, has de-

scended from the dignity of his proper command, to direct our smallest movements. His violence has in a great measure supplied the want of force in preventing the enemy from crossing the river, which might have been very fatal. He has been as idly employed in preparing equipments for the militia as they assemble, pointing them to a proper object, and other offices of a good commander. Should they tarry a little longer, and it is found practicable to collect an adequate force, I flatter myself they will not escape with impunity. To what place they will point their next exertions, we cannot even conjecture. The whole country on tide waters, and adjacent to them, is equally open to similar insult."

(Signed) THOMAS JEFFERSON

Upon this subject we will only add, an extract of a letter, written by Gen. John Minor of Fredericksburg, to his friend—"That being in company with Gen. Stevens and others, when the charge brought against Mr. Jefferson by Charles Symmes the present collector of the port of Alexandria, was the subject of conversation, Gen. S. expressed the warmest indignation; said it was a falsehood to his certain knowledge; that he despised the idea of effecting any political purpose at the expence of truth; that it was true he and Mr. J. differed in their sentiments, but nevertheless he did not believe there was a man in the U. States, more attached to the interests of his country than Mr. J. He then stated particulars—that he was at Richmond a member of the Legislature, and was among the last who quitted Richmond, on the alarm being given that the enemy were coming into the city; that he saw Mr. J. there, long after he thought it prudent that he should be gone; that he told him so, and urged him to be gone; stated to him what effects his capture might have upon the state; that as he had no troops he could do no possible good by staying; Mr. J. replied his reason for staying was to save as many of the public records as possible; that he would effect more by his presence than by age: that he was well in united and was not apprehensive of being taken. I think he added that he believed Mr. J. did not leave the city until the enemy were entering the lower part of it. From thence he went to Westham, and there took measures to secure the public arms. He then spoke of the affair of Charlottesville, and I distinctly remember acquitted himself of all blame."

The man must be blind indeed who after reading the testimony here adduced can see "any thing indicative of timidity, unwarranted by any immediate movement of the enemy, and forbidden by a regard to those duties, which belong to the station he held."

There is some testimony so strong and so conclusive that every man is capable of deducing the proper inferences. Of this nature is the testimony which we have now advanced. We sincerely believe, that there is scarce a single individual whom this accumulated evidence will not serve to convince that Mr. Jefferson so far from meeting the reproaches is entitled to the gratitude of his country, for his services during this period of the war: that to his activity and prudence we principally owe the preservation of most of our military stores, and some of our public records; and that during this perilous period, his presence of mind, his unshaken tranquillity, the unshaken spirit of his soul were not less conspicuous than his activity and prudence.

That Mr. Turner should not have touched upon this part of Mr. Jefferson's history is true but it is