

Primary Source: Minutes on The Halifax Resolves ^[1]

On April 12, 1776 at the meeting of the Fourth Provincial Congress, North Carolina's revolutionary assembly authorized her delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence. At the same time, they cemented their resolve and intention on paper, writing their resolutions into the minutes of the their meeting. These revolutionary resolutions have since become known as the Halifax Resolves.

The resolves were the culmination of a year of discussions in conferences at the county level across the colony, and it was the first official action by a colony that called for severance of ties to Britain and independence for the colonies. They were unanimously adopted by the 83 delegates assembled at Halifax and written into the meeting minutes.

North Carolina's assembly sent copies of the resolves to its delegates who were assembled at Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress, and they became an important element in the push to draft the Declaration of Independence. The Halifax Resolves were important not only because they were the first official action by a colony calling for independence, but also because they were not unilateral recommendations. They were instead recommendations directed to all the colonies and their delegates assembled at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Virginia followed with her own recommendations soon after the adoption of the Halifax Resolution, and eventually on July 4, the final draft of the Declaration of Independence was signed. William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, and John Penn were the delegates from North Carolina who signed the Declaration of Independence

Today at least two copies of the Resolves are known to survive. The copy sent to the Continental Congress is held in the collection of the National Archives and the other is in the collection of the State Archives of North Carolina.

Read a transcription of a portion of the assembly's minutes below.

The Select Committee taking into Consideration the [usurpations](#) ^[2] and violences attempted and committed by the King and Parliament of Britain against America, and the further Measures to be taken for frustrating the same, and for the better defence of this province reported as follows, to wit,

It appears to your Committee that pursuant to the Plan concerted by the British Ministry for [subjugating](#) ^[3] America, the King and Parliament of Great Britain have usurped a Power over the Persons and Properties of the People unlimited and uncontroled; and disregarding their humble Petitions for Peace, Liberty and safety, have made divers Legislative Acts, denouncing War Famine and every Species of [Calamity](#) ^[4] against the Continent in General. That British Fleets and Armies have been and still are daily employed in destroying the People and committing the most horrid devastations on the Country. That Governors in different Colonies have declared Protection to Slaves who should [imbrue](#) ^[5] their Hands in the Blood of their Masters. That the Ships belonging to America are declared prizes of War and many of them have been violently seized and confiscated in consequence of which multitudes of the people have been destroyed or from easy Circumstances reduced to the most [Lamentable](#) ^[6] distress.

And whereas the moderation [hitherto](#) ^[7] [manifested](#) ^[8] by the United Colonies and their sincere desire to [bereconciled](#) ^[9] to the mother Country on Constitutional Principles, have [procured](#) ^[10] no [mitigation](#) ^[11] of the aforesaid Wrongs and usurpations, and no hopes remain of obtaining [redress](#) ^[12] by those Means alone which have been hitherto tried, Your Committee are of Opinion that the house should enter into the following Resolve to wit,

Resolved that the delegates for this Colony in the Continental Congress be empowered to [concur](#) ^[13] with the delegates of the other Colonies in declaring Independency, and forming foreign Alliances, reserving to this Colony the Sole, and Exclusive right of forming a Constitution and Laws for this Colony, and of appointing delegates from time to time (under the direction of a general Representation thereof) to meet the delegates of the other Colonies for such purposes as shall be hereafter pointed out.

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Portrait of William Hooper, delegate to the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence

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3 January 2018

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