

[Alexandria 1779 10 25, Church 1069P, Record Group 78, The Library of Virginia]

A459 To the Honble M^r. Speaker and Gentlemen, Delegates for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The remonstrance & Petition of the Merchants, Adventurers to sea, in the Town of Alexandria Humbly shewith to your Honours,

The inconveniences and hardships, that a great part of the trading People in Virginia labour under, from the establishment of the Naval Office at the mouth of Potowmac or near it. For a considerable distance up the River, it is many Miles wide. In the Spring, Fall & Winter, the Winds hang much from the Northward, are generally so violent, and the Virginia Shore, so open to them, that no Vessell can with safety ride at Anchor near it, And in general are obliged to make a Harbour on the Maryland side, Besides every Day's experience proves to us the fact of exteme danger that some to Anchor so near the mouth of the River, either to clear out or enter, whilst the Enemy so commonly watch & take Those under sail Thereabouts. How much more dangerous must the situation of those be, that are obliged to Come to Anchor on the Maryland side; the Captain and at least four of his Crew go from The Vessell, several Miles to enter or clear at the Virginia Office, in which time the Enemy Appears, Those left on board the Vessell too weak to get her under way to make their escapes, and the Master perhaps looking on, unable to return to the assistance and care of his Vessell. This is a matter of consequence to those to whom the present Office is usefull, we wish it may be kept open, and to those whose interest it is to have another established, We pray your attention. Alexandria Dumfries & Colchester, own almost all the Vessells on this River, and there is scarcely a foreign Vessell, but what comes addressed to some Merchant in one of these Towns. For these reasons & just ones We think they are, You must permit us to request that you take This our rcommendation and Petition unto your serious consideration and that you take and act for a separate Office to be erected and established in the Town of Alexandria, and the Officer to be appointed, be obliged to reside in the Said Town and the Office not to be executed by a Deputy. In this case Those whom it may suit, can clear out at the present Office, and the Merchants and trading People of Potowmac River and Foreigners bound to the Towns aforesaid, can with safety & convenience enter and clear. We hope your Honours will think our request highly reasonable and grant us relief in the Premisses.---

William M ^c Farley	John Muir	Robert Harford	Edw ^d Owens	Hooe & Harrison
Richard Arell	Thos Kirkpatirck	Moses Tandy[?]	W ^m Hunter	Josiah Watson
		W ^m Paton		
Jacob Cox	George Ross	James Stuart	W ^m Herbert	W ^m Hartshorne
Washer Blunt	Myles G Lungmarsh	Allison & Ramsay	RA Contee	
Benj ⁿ Chapin	John Carlyle		James Adam	McCrea & Mease---
	W ^m Ramsay	Sam ^l Arell	Rich ^d Conway	
	John Mills		Robert Adam	Fitzgerald & Peers
	Micheal Thorn	Anable & Alexander Lory	Joseph Harper	John Harper
	James Lawrason			Low & McIver

[Reverse]
Alexandria Petition
Octo^r 25th 1779
Ref^d to propositions
(Reasonable)

[This line a later addition]

A1459-1

Fairfax County Oct 19 1779.

The deposition of Capt
John Sandford taken before me one of the Magistrates
for the County aforesaid & in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Deponant being Sworn deposeth and saith
that he has Sailed from the Town of Alexandria to
Sea these eight years past, in the course of which time
the Vessells to which he belonged & commanded have
frequently been detain'd by calling at the Naval
Office so as to loose a fair wind that would have carried
them to sea immediately, & that thereby they have been
obliged to wait till a shift of wind which has taken up
many days; that the case has been the same often
times on their return from sea with a fair wind
that would have brought them quite to Alexandria,
they have by being obliged to Stop to enter, been detained
so as to loose their wind and taken up several
days afterwards in getting to the aforesaid Town against
head winds--That in the Winter Fall & Spring
the Winds frequently blow so violently upon the Virginia
shore as to oblige Vessells to Anchor on the
Maryland side, that then they have about
12 to 15 Miles to go in their Boats to the Virginia
Office & that during the continuance of the
wind no row Boat can return to on board
the Vessell on the Maryland shore. That he
on his return from Cape Francois last December
12 M^o came too on the Schooner Sydnay opposite

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the Virginia Office to enter, that the Wind came on so violently as to part both his Cables, that he was obliged & with difficulty it was he got the Vessel under way, that he stood back & forward in the River during a whole night, and next Morning run his vessel ashore in Smith's Creek on the Maryland side & there lay till could borrow Anchors. that he had almost his whole Cargo to unlode on the beach before he could get his Vessel off again, that one of his Anchors he found again & that the other he totally lost. That the Office lyes extremely open to the Enemy and that he has known them to be high up the River many times and has frequently heard of their taking Vessells thereabout, and further saith not.

Sworn before
Robert Adam

Capt J Sandford's
Deposition

The deposition of Captain Lawrence Sandford taken before me, one of the Magistrates for the County in the Common Wealth of Virginia--

The deponent being Sworn, deposeth and saith that he has sailed from the Town of Alexandria to Sea these Fifteen years past, in the course of which time the Vessells to which he belonged and Commanded have frequently been detained many days by calling at the South Potowmack Naval Office to clear and enter; particularly in the Winter Season, he has been obliged to Stop at said office with a fine Southerly Wind, that would have carried him to his destined part of Alexandria, that while he was entering, the Wind has Choppd about to the Northward, turned intensely cold, block'd the River up with Ice, endanger'd Vessell & Cargoe & prevented his getting to Alexandria for many Weeks. That the Harbour at said office lies as exceedingly bleak & Open to Northerly and Easterly Winds, which makes the Harbour in the Winter Season very dangerous for Vessells to Ride in, that he has often went ashore in his Boat and before he could get his Business done, the Wind has Sprung up as Violently as to render'd it impossible for him to return to his Vessell for Twenty four Hours--The Vessell at the same time

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being in great danger of ~~being~~ driving ashore.

Sworn before.

Robert Adam

Capt L Sandford's
deposition

[This line a later addition]

A1459-3

Fairfax County Oct^r 19th 1779 ~

The deposition of Captain
Benjamin Earle taken before me, one of the
Magistrates for the County In the Common Wealth
of Virginia.

The deponent being Sworn depos
eth and saith, that he has saild out of the
port of Alexandria for some time past, during
which time he has always met with delay
at the South Potomack Naval Office, sometimes
loosing a fair Wind and at others the Naval
officers being absent--upon the whole from
his experience, he thinks it very inconvenient
for Vessells to call at said Office, particularly
Vessells belonging to ports anylength up Potomack.

Sworn to before

Robert Adam

[Reverse]

Cap^t Earle's deposition

[This line a later addition]

A1459-4

Fairfax County Oct^r 19th 1779~

The deposition of Captain
Robert Conway taken before me, one of the Magistrates
for the County in the Common Wealth of Virginia.---

The deponent being Sworn,
deposeth and saith that he has saild from the
Town of Alexandria for several years past, in the
course of which time he has been detained at
the South Potomack Naval Office--that in
his opinion the Harbour at said office is extremely
dangerous at many times for Vessells to lye at, it
being so much expos'd and Open to Northerly and
Easterly Winds as often to endanger Vessells driving
~~from~~ ashore – in short the inconveniences & danger
are so obvious that they are not worth ~~enumerating~~ ^{enumerating[?]}
particularly enumerating, but upon the whole
he thinks it a very improper place for Vessells to
call at either inward or outward Bound.

Sworn to befor

Robert Adam

[Reverse]

Cap^t Robert Conway's
Deposition