

## Richmond in the Revolution

Richmond was hardly more than a village at the falls of the James River when fate and geography placed it in the crosshairs of the American Revolution. By winter 1775, many Virginians recognized the prophetic view of Hanover's Patrick Henry, voiced a year earlier, that war with Great Britain was inevitable.

Since the capitol at Williamsburg was considered too vulnerable to British attack, it was decided to convene a Virginia Convention in Richmond to debate and further define grievances and action against Great Britain.

In March, virtually every great Virginian of the era, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, Patrick Henry and others made their way to what was then the largest meeting space in town at St. John's Church. Here, they debated a resolution authored by Mr. Henry which provided that, "A well-regulated militia . . . is the natural strength and only security of a free government . . . Resolved, therefore, that this colony be immediately put into a posture of defense."



Speaking to the resolution, Mr. Henry proclaimed with mounting intensity, "We must fight! I repeat it sir. We must fight!" And then, he uttered the words which were to make his name immortal. "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Barely a month later, on April 19, 1775, the *shot hear round the world* was fired at Concord, Massachusetts. Only a day later, Royal Governor Dunmore seized the gunpowder stored at Williamsburg and Virginians knew Patrick Henry's prophecy was rapidly being fulfilled.