

VIRGINIANA FILE

*PWC - Historic Sites
(Pennsylvania)*

RICHARD HENRY LEE

FILE
Prince William Public Library
Manassas, Va.

*Weems-Batts Museum
College*

45 YEARS OLD AT THE SIGNING— FIFTH SON AND 7TH CHILD B 1732 AT STRATFORD HALL, HIS EDUCATION BEGAN WITH PRIVATE TOTORUS & WAS SUPPLEMENTED BY EXTENSIVE STUDY AT WAKEFIELD ACADEMY IN YORKSHIRE ENGLAND AND A TOUR OF NORTHERN EUROPE. SAILED HOME ABOUT 1751 AT 19 YRS OF AGE. MD. 1757 BUILT AND SOON OCCUPIED CHANTILLY. IN 1768 HIS WIFE DIED LEAVING 4 CHILDREN. THE NEXT YEAR HE REMARRIED & HAD 5 MORE CHILDREN. FOLLOWING FAMILY TRADITION COMMITTED HIMSELF TO POLITICS IN 1757 AT THE AGE OF 25 HE BECAME JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OF WESTMORELAND CO. THE NEXT YEAR HE MOVED UP TO THE HOUSE OF BURGESSSES AND SAT THERE UNTIL 1775.

THE LEES OF VA. HAD BEEN IN POLITICS FOR A CENTURY, WHILE NONE OF THE BROTHERS ABANDONED FAMILY TRADITION RICHARD ALONE TRIED TO MAKE HIS AVOCATION INTO A CAREER. HE TOOK PRIDE IN HIS PLANTATION BUT HE LIVED FOR POLITICS AND ROSE TO PROMINENCE AS LEADER SECOND ONLY TO PATRICK HENRY.

HE BROUGHT A CRUSADING SPIRIT INTO A HOUSE PACKED WITH EASY GOING GENTLEMEN. HIS STANDARDS WERE HIGH AND SEVERE. IN AN EARLY SPEECH THAT WON LITTLE APPLA&SSE HE CALLED FOR A CHECK ON THE SPREAD OF SLAVERY, HE TWICE DEMANDED AN INVESTIGATION OF JOHN ROBINSONS MANAGEMENT OF THE TREASURY. ✓ THIS EARNED HIM THE ENMITY OF THE RULING CLASS IN WILLIAMSBURG WHO FELT THAT HE WAS A TRAITOR TO HIS CLASS.

RHL ALSO HOPED FOR MILITARY GLORY, OFFERING HIS SERVICES TO GEN. BRADDOCK WHICH HE REJECTED SHORTLY AFTER HE HAD A HUNTING ACCIDENT WHICH LEFT HIM WITH A MAIMED HAND WHICH HE USED TO ADVANTAGE BY WRAPPING IN A BLACK SCARF WHEN HE SPOKE AND WANTED TO MAKE HIS POINT.

IN 1773 LEE BEGAN CORRESPONDING WITH SAM ADAMS WHICH LED TO COMMITTES OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH HELP OF A NEW YONG MEMBER THOMAS JEFFERSON LEE GOT THE HOUSE TO ORDER A DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER TO MARK THE DAY BOSTON WOULD BE CLOSED BY THE PART ACT AND TO ISSUE A CALL FOR A MEETING OF DELEGATES FROM ALL THE COLONIES TO DISCUSS THE GRIEVANCES WITH THE MOTHER COUNTRY. He rec'd largest # of votes in Resoln of Cong Jefferson was 2nd. —

LEE HAD THE PRESENCE FOR A PUBLIC PERFORMANCE HE WAS TALL, OVER 6' PALE SKIN, SLIGHTLY GAUNT ALL SET OFF BY SANDY RED HAIR, SPOKE EASILY IN A SOOTHING VOICE, A HIGH STYLE OF ELOQUENCE, HOWEVER HE DID NOT EXCELL AS A WRITER OTHERWISE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED UPON TO WRITE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENCE SINCE HE WAS THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR INDEPENCE.

*Notes from talk by Barbara Kirby J
Historic Dumfries VA. Dec 2, 1976.*