

PWC-Historic Sites
(Leesylvania)

FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE

Weems-Botts Museum
Collection

AGE 41 AT THE SIGNING

5TH SON AND 8TH CHILD OF THOMAS LEE B 1734 AT THE FAMILY ESTATE STRATFORD HALL IN WESTMORLAND CO. HE WAS EDUCATED BY A PRIVATE TUTOR AND APPEARS TO BE THE QUIETER AND MORE RELUCTANT TO SPEAK THAN HIS BROTHER R. H. L. HOWEVER HE DID TRY TO FOLLOW A FAMILY TRADITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE. HE SERVED CONTINUOUSLY IN HOUSE OF BURGESSES FROM AGE 24. HE RARELY ROSE TO SPEAK & CHOSE TO FOLLOW RATHER THAN TO LEAD. DESPITE HIS SHYNESS AND WEAKNESS AS A SPEAKER HE EXERCISED EXTENSIVE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. A CONTEMPORARY SAID HE POSSESSED A MORE ACUTE AND CORRECT MIND THAN HIS BROTHER AND OFTEN OPPOSED HIM BUT HIS VOTE WAS ALWAYS RIGHT EVENTUALLY. 1769 HE MARRIED REBECCA TAYLOR OF RICHMOND CO. AND THEY RESIDED AT MR. AIRY UNTIL MENOKIN (A NEW HOME COL. TAYLOR WAS BUILDING FOR THEM) WAS COMPLETED.

HE HAD JOINED THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AT AN EARLY DATE. FROM THE TIME OF THE STAMP ACT IN 1765 UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR A DECADE LATER HE PARTICIPATED IN MOST OF THE VA. PROTEST & ASSEMBLIES, SERVED ON MILITARY & MARITIME COMMITTEES AS WELL AS THAT CHARGED WITH DRAFTING THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, THE NON IMPORTATION ASSOC. 177

HE CAME TO CONGRESS FAVORING INDEPENDENCE AND DID NOT AGONIZE OVER THE DECISION TO BREAK WITH ENG. THE ISSUE WAS SIMPLE. HE SAID "I FEEL MYSELF DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE SECURITY & HAPPINESS OF AMER. COMPARED WITH WHICH THE INTEREST OF BRITAIN IS A FEATHER IN THE SCALE." HE SAID BRIEFLY WHAT RHL TOOK HOURS OF ORATING TO SAY.

HE WAS AN IMMINENTLY FAIR MAN EVEN TO THE POINT OF CONSIDERING PAYING THE ENG. MERCHANT FOR THE TEA THAT WAS LOST IN BOSTON OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY CONVINCED HIM THAT THAT IDEA WAS NOT WISE.

HE MADE LITTLE NOISE EVEN IN THE MOST TIMULTIOUS DEBATE, A QUITE EVEN TIMID PERSONALITY NOT DULL JUST UNOBTRUSIVE A QUIET FIRM SUPPORTER OF INDEPENDENCE.

Notes from talk by Barbara Kirby
to Hesterie Dumphries VA. Dec. 2, 1976

his gestures

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT HE WAS SO CONCERNED ABOUT HIS PRESENTATIONS IN THE HOUSE THAT HE PRACTICED BEFORE A MIRROR.

LEE'S OUTSTANDING CONGRESSIONAL ACT WAS THE INTRODUCTION ON JUNE 7, 1776 OF THE RESOLUTION FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN, SIGNED BY JOHN ADAMS. AFTER 1776 HOWEVER HIS INFLUENCE WANE AND 3 YEARS LATER ILL HEALTH FORCED HIS RESIGNATION.

UNLIKE HIS BROTHER THOS. LIGHTFOOT HE DID NOT SUPPORT ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION BECAUSE HE FEARED A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT & WROTE TWO PAMPHLETS OUTLINING HIS OBJECTION TO THE CONSTITUTION. HIS CAREER FOLLOWED A DESCENDING COURSE HE BECAME EMBROILED IN A CONTROVERY HIS BROTHER ARTHUR HAD WITH BENJ. FRANKLIN & TURNED HOSTILE TO FRANCE.

HE CAME BACK TO CHANTILLY IN POOR HEALTH & DIED TWO YEARS, LATER.