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## National Intelligencer.

*Organization of Committees of Safety, By Mrs. Warren.*

*From Mrs. Warren's History of the American Revolution.*

BY the frequent dissolution of the general assemblies, all public debate had been precluded, and the usual regular intercourse between the colonies cut off. The modes of legislative communication thus obstructed, at a period when the necessity of harmony and concert was obvious to every eye, no systematical opposition to gubernatorial intrigues, supported by the king and parliament of G. Britain, was to be expected without the utmost concord, confidence and union of all the colonies. Perhaps no single step contributed so much to cement the union of the colonies, and the final acquisition of independence, as the establishment of committees of correspondence. This supported a chain of communication from New-Hampshire to Georgia, that produced unanimity and energy throughout the continent.

As in these annals there has yet been no particular mention made of this institution, it is but justice to name at once the author, the origin and the importance of the measure.

At an early period of the contest, when the public mind was agitated by unexpected events, and remarkably pervaded with perplexity and anxiety, *James Warren, Esq.* of Plymouth, first proposed this institution to a private friend, on a visit at his own house.*—Mr. Warren had been an active and influential member of the general assembly from the beginning of the troubles in America, which commenced soon after the demise of George II. The principles and firmness of this gentleman were well known, and the uprightness of his character had sufficient weight to recommend the measure. As soon as the proposal was communicated to a number of gentlemen in Boston, it was adopted with zeal, and spread with the rapidity of enthusiasm, from town to town, and from province to province.† Thus an intercourse was established, by which a similarity of opinion, a connexion of interest, and an union of action appeared, that set opposition at defiance, and defeated the machinations of their enemies through all the colonies.

The plan suggested was clear and methodical; it proposed that a public meeting should be called in every town; that a number of persons should be selected by a plurality of voices; that they should be men of respectable characters, whose attachment to the great cause of America had been uniform; that they should be vested by a majority of suffrages with power to take cognizance of the state of commerce, of the intrigues of *toryism*, of litigious ruptures that might create disturbances, and every thing else that might be thought to militate with the rights of the people, and to promote every thing that tended to general utility.

The business was not tardily executed. Committees were every where chosen, who were directed to keep up a regular correspondence with each other, and to give information of all intelligence received, relative to the proceedings of administration, so far as they affected the interest of the British colonies throughout America. The trust was faithfully and diligently discharged, and when afterwards all legislative authority was suspended, the courts of justice shut up, and the last traits of British government annihilated in the colonies, this new institution became a kind of juridical tribunal. Its injunctions were influential beyond the hopes of its most sanguine friends, and the recommendations of committees of correspondence had the force of law.—Thus, as despotism frequently springs from anarchy, a regular democracy sometimes arises from the severe encroachments of despotism.

* *Samuel Adams, Esq. of Boston.*

† *The general impulse at this time seemed to operate by sympathy, before consultation could be had: thus it appeared afterwards that the vigilant inhabitants of Virginia had concerted a similar plan about the same period.*

*On Florida, and a work entitled a Concise Natural and Moral History of East and West Florida, by Bernard Romans, 12mo. New-York, 1776.*

[*Extracted from Volney's view of the soil and climate of the U. S. of America.*]

BERNARD ROMANS was an enlightened physician and observer, who spent several years in Florida. He divides the country into two climates; one of which he calls the northern, extending from latitude 31 deg. to 27 deg. 40 m. the southern extending to the end of the peninsula, in latitude 24 deg. This distinction he chiefly founds upon the frequency of frosts within one line, and their rarity beyond it. He might have said, more accurately and distinctly, that water freezes as far south as 27 deg. 40 m. but ceases to freeze in the rest of the peninsula.

The extremity of Florida, on the western side, is very liable to storms and whirlwinds from May to August. They rise suddenly from the south west and south south west, and are transient.

Dr. Mackenzie has said much of the effect of the air in producing mould, rust, &c. but though this is manifest at St. Augustine, yet there is not a healthier place than this in this quarter. The inhabitants enjoy sound health, and reach great longevity, and invalids resort hither from Cuba, as to another Montpelier.

The northern district, which is formed by the continental part of Florida, resembles the southern part of the peninsula, but its customary winds are somewhat colder. The epidemic of Mobile, in 1760, arose entirely from the intemperance of the soldiers. Even physicians advise the settlers to a moderate use of liquor, but, unluckily, they are sure to overleap the prescribed bounds, and to run into excess.

The great evil of the American climate is not the degree of temperature, high or low, nor the drought, nor the wet, but it is the violent and sudden transition from one state to its opposite. So great are these changes, that they sometimes amount to 30 degs. in twelve hours, and this evil is much greater in the north than the south.

The soil of Florida is generally a bed of white clay, with a stratum above it of white sand. The coast is naked and bare, but the inland is a forest of firs.

Bernard Romans agrees with me in his notions of the savages. He describes them as a sottish, filthy, idle, pilfering and haughty race; vain, irritable, vindictive, and ferocious. The Chickasaws he singles out as the worst of them all, and Chactaws are, it seems, a little better. They are honest, have some notions of personal property, and are more industrious than the rest. They are hospitable to excess; but are improvident, selling their all to the pedlar and hazarding their all in gambling. Suicide and sodomy are crimes by no means rare among every tribe.

In 1771, the Chickasaws could muster 250 warriors, the Choctaws 2600, and the confederate Creeks 3500; which together make up no despicable force of upwards of 6000 men.

On the soil and produce of the country, our author is very full and satisfactory. He divides the land into six different kinds; the pine land, hammock land, savannahs, swamps, marshes, and bay, or cypress galls.

1st. "The pine land, commonly called pine barren, which makes up the largest body by far, the peninsula being scarce any thing else; but above a hundred miles towards the north west from St. Augustine, and about two hundred from the sea in West Floridas, carry us entirely out of it. This land consists of a grey or white sand, and in many places of a red or yellow gravel. It produces a great variety of shrubs or plants. The principle produce from whence it derives its name is the *pinus foliis longissimis ex una theca ternis*, or yellow pine and pitch pinetree, which I take to be a variety of the same species, both excellent and good timber.

"It is on this kind of land that immense stocks of cattle are maintained, although the most natural grass on this soil is of a very harsh nature, and the cattle not at all fond of it. It is known by the name of wire grass, and they only eat it while young. For the procuring it young or renewing this kind of pasture, the woods are frequently fired, and at different seasons in order to have a succession of young grass, but the savannahs that are interspersed in this kind of land, furnish a more plentiful and more proper food for the cattle.

"Some high pine hills are so covered with two or three varieties of the oak, as to make an underwood to the lofty pines; and a species of dwarf chesnut is often found here; another species, of a larger growth, is also found in the lower parts, particularly in the edges of the bay or cypress galls.

"This barren and unfavorable soil, in a wet season, bears many things far beyond expectation, and is very useful for the cultivation of peach and mulberry orchards. This land might also be rendered useful for many other purposes; but either the people do not chuse to go out of the old beaten tract, or content themselves with looking elsewhere for new land, improveable with less cost. The method of meliorating it is certainly obvious to the meanest capacity, as it every where, at a greater or less depth, covers a stiff marly kind of clay, which I am certain, was it properly mixed with the land, would render it fertile; and this might be done with little expence, the clay lying, in some places, within half a foot or a foot of the surface: in most places it is found at the depth of 3, 4, or 5 feet, consequently not very hard to come at. In East Florida, in the southern parts, this kind of land is very rocky, but especially from the latitude 25 deg. 50m. southward to the point, where it is a solid rock, of a kind of lime stone, covered with innumerable small, loose, and sharp stones, every where.

"In West Florida the pine land is also frequently found rocky, with an iron stone, especially near where the pines are found growing in a gravelly tract, which is frequently the case here.

"The *hammock land*, so called from its appearing in tufts among the lofty pines: some small spots of this kind, if seen at a distance, have a very romantic appearance. The large parcels of it often divide swamps, creeks, or rivers from the pine land; this is indeed its most common situation. The whole of the uplands, remote from the sea in the northern parts, is this kind of land; its soil is various, in some places a sand of divers colours, and in East Florida often a white sand; but the true hammock soil is a mixture of clay and a blackish sand, and in some spots a kind of ochre. In East Florida some of this is also sometimes found rocky; on every kind of this land lies a stratum of black mould, made by the decayed leaves, &c. of the wood and other plants growing upon it. The salts contained in this stratum render it very fruitful, and, when cleared, this is the best, nay, the only fit land, for the production of indigo, potatoes, and pulse: the first crops, by means of the manure above mentioned, generally are very plentiful, but the salts being soon evaporated, if the soil over which it lay should prove to be sand, it is not better than pine land; the other sort bears many years planting; its natural produce is so various in this climate, that the complete description of all would be more work than one man's life time would be sufficient for.

"The *savannahs* are in this country of two very different kinds; the one is to be found in the pine lands, and notwithstanding the black appearance of the soil, they are as much a white sand as the higher lands round them. True it is that clay is very often much nearer to their surface than in the higher pine lands; they are a kind of sinks or drains to those higher lands, and their low situation only prevents the growth of pines in them. In wet weather the roads leading through them are almost impassable. On account of their producing some species of grass, of a better kind than the wire grass, they are very often styled meadows; and I believe, if they could be improved by draining them without taking away all their moisture, very useful grass might be raised in them; but on draining them completely, they prove to be as arrant a sand as any in this country.

"The other savannahs differ very widely from these, and are chiefly to be found in West Florida. They consist of a higher ground, often with small gentle risings in them. Some are of a vast extent, & on the west of Mississippi, they are said to be many days journey over. The soil here is very fertile; in some I have seen fossil shells in great numbers, in other flint, in others again some chalk and marl. It is remarkable, that cattle are very fond of the grasses growing here; the Chickasaw old field, as it is termed, is a clear demonstration of this, for the cattle will come to it from any distance, even when the grass scarcely appears; and in all the circumjacent tract are abundance of both winter and summer canes to be found, on which they might more luxuriously feed.

"Swamps are also found of two kinds, river and inland swamps. Those on the rivers are justly esteemed the most valuable, and the more so if they are in the tide way, because then river water may be at pleasure let on or kept out, with much less labor and expence than in the other kinds. These lands are the sources of riches in these provinces, because, where they lie between the sandy pine barrens, they produce that valuable staple, rice, & on the Mississippi, where much of this river land is situated a great deal higher than the common run of it in Carolina and other similar countries, this soil is the best adapted for corn and indigo yet known. Some of these grounds are clay, others sand, and others again partake of both; when used for rice it matters not which of these soils they are made up of; but I believe, were the sandy ones to be quit drained, they would prove barren enough. The use of water on rice is more to suppress the growth of noxious weeds and grass, which would otherwise stifle the grain, than for promoting the growth of the rice itself; for none of the grasses can stand the water, but rice does, as long as it is totally immersed. Therefore it is, that after weeding, the planter, if he has it convenient, lets on water to about half the height of his grain. By swamps then, in general, is to be understood any low ground subject to inundations, distinguished from marshes in having a large growth of timber, and much underwood, canes, reeds, wythes, vines, briars, and such like, so matted together, that they are, in a great measure, impenetrable to man or beast.

"The back or inland swamps answer in situation to what are called the meadows or savannahs, among the pine lands; their soil being rich, occasions them to bear trees.

"The marshes are next to be considered. They are of four kinds, two in the salt, and two in the fresh water. They are either soft or hard; the soft marshes, consisting of a very wet clay or mud, are as yet of no use, without a very great expense to drain them; the hard ones are made up of a kind of marly Clay, which in dry seasons is almost burned up. True it is, they afford a pasture sufficient to keep any graminivorous animals in good order; but their milk and flesh, in seasons when the cattle near the sea side cannot find any other food, and consequently feed on this alone, have so horrible a taste, that no stranger to the country can make use of them.

"The marshes on fresh water are in every respect similar to those on the salt, except that they are not impregnated with the saline particles, of which the first are very replete; wherefore the hard ones with little trouble, are adapted to cultivation; the soft ones cost a considerable deal more of expence, to render them fit to answer this purpose, but when so drained as to answer this end, they certainly are by no means inferior to any land in this country. In the lower part of these marshes grows a kind of hitherto undescribed grain, of which the western Indians make a great use for bread. I never could see it in blossom, therefore cannot describe it. It is known by the name of wild oats.

"I shall next describe the bay and cypress galls. These intersect the pine lands, and are seldom of any breadth; the bay galls are properly water courses, covered with a spungy earth mixed with a kind of matted vegetable fibres. They are so very unstable as to shake for a great extent round a person, who, standing on some part thereof, moves himself slightly up and down; they often prove fatal to cattle; and sometimes I have been detained for above an hour at the narrowest passes of them, they being so dangerous to cross, that frequently a horse plunges in, so as to leave only his head in sight.

"The cypress galls differ from these in being a firm sandy soil, in having no vitriolic taste in the water, and very seldom vent. I never knew these made use of for the purpose of planting, and the cyprus they produce is a dwarf kind, not being fit for use, being very much twisted and often hollow. There is no undergrowth here, but in dry seasons some tolerable grass. Through all the above species of land we find a distribution of very fine clay, fit for manufacturing. The finest I ever saw is at the village on Mobille Bay, where I have seen the inhabitants, in imitation of the savages, have several rough made vessels thereof.

"The water in this country is very various as to taste, quality, and use. There are salt, brackish, nitrous, sulphurous, and good fresh springs in most parts of this country, as well as salt and fresh lakes, lagoons, and rivers. The rivers also vary in many respects, and so does the sea, as well in the color and clearness of the water, as in its degree of saltness. The water of St. Mary's and Nassau, and all the brooks that run into them, is very good, wholesome, and well tasted. The color in the rivers is dark, as in all the American rivers of the southern district. St. John's is a curiosity among rivers indeed; this rises at a small distance from the lagoon called Indian river, somewhere in or near the latitude of 27 deg. perhaps out of the lake Mayacco, which I have reason to believe really exists, and is the head of the river St. Lucia, as I am told by a credible Spanish hunter, who had been carried there by way of this last river. From its origin it runs through wide extended plains and marshes, till near the latitude 28 deg. where it approaches the Lagoon much. It then continues its course with a considerable current northward, and glides through five great lakes, of which the last, called Lake George, is by much the most considerable. In this last lake is about eight feet water; it is 20 miles long, & about eleven or twelve wide. All these lakes and the river in general is very pleasant. Endless orange groves are found here, and indeed on every part of the river; below these the river grows wider, loses its current, and has in some places none, in others a retrograde one, when yet lower down it is again in its true direction. The banks of this river are very poor land, and exhibit, in a number of places sad monuments of the folly and extravagant ideas of the first European adventurers and schemers, and the villany of their managers. The tide does not affect this river very far up. In many places, high up this river, are found some extraordinary springs, which, at a small distance from the river, on both sides, rush or boil out of the earth, at once becoming navigable for boats, and from 25 to 40 yards wide: their course is seldom half a mile before they meet the river. Their water is, contrary to that of the river, clear, so as to admit of seeing a small piece of money at the depth of 10 feet or more; they smell strong of sulphur, and whatever is thrown in them becomes soon encrusted with a white fungous matter; their taste is bituminous, very disagreeable, and they in my opinion, cause the green cloudings we see on the surface of the water of this river, and make it putrid, and [illegible] wholesome as experience has taught me it is.

"I have no sufficient ground to decide upon another circumstance which I am told, viz. that when rice is overflown with this water, it kills it; above these springs the water of the river is good. This river is from one and a half to 5 miles wide, except at the house of Mr. Rolle, who has here made an old attempt towards settling and making an estate in as complete a sandy desart as can be found. Just above this it is full of islands, exhibiting every where a very romantic appearance.—There is a fine piece of water called Don's Lake; this is about 9 miles from the river, eastward from this place; this empties itself by a stream into the river. Another, called the Doctor's lake, is on the west side, about 60 miles from the mouth; we see a variety of aquatic plants floating thereon.

"Before I leave St. John's river, I must not forget the river running from south to north called Pablo. This originates at a small distance from St. Mark's or North River, and empties into St. John's at a small distance from the mouth. The water of this river is good, so is the land on it; and it is tho't that a communication with St. Mark's or the North River might be effected without much difficulty; this would open an inland navigation by canoes or boats, all the way from Carolina to near the Mosketo.

"The river St. Mary, although it is said to originate in the *Ekanphanekin* swamp, has a current of fine, clear and wholesome water, supplied from the pine lands through which it flows, with many fine springs, runs and rivulets of very clear water. Nassau has also the same blessings, but doth not spring far from the sea. On Amelia island, near the sea, is a very good spring, which makes a fine stream for some miles, dividing the island almost into two; but below the spring the water is not commendable. On the beach between St. John's and St. Augustine, at or near a place called the Horseguards, there are three good springs running into the sea, and in every part where the beach is clear sand, water is obtained by digging. About 4 miles north of the St. Augustine, rises St. Sebastian's creek, being a good fresh spring; it soon joins a creek in salt marshes, and at a small distance from town it becomes very large and deep. It empties into St. Anastasia's sound, 2 miles south of St. Augustine, making a peninsula of this territory, nearly in the form of a crescent. Three miles farther south is the mouth of the river St. Nicholas, not very considerable; St. Cecilia in the same sound; the north west, south of the Matanca and Penon; the Tomoke and Spruce creek, in the Musketo Lagoon, and in short every river and creek in the country, except those above named, are excellent wholesome water.—Thus much, I suppose, will suffice as to the nature and quality of the water; All the rivers and springs in West Florida are good."

FROM THE BOSTON CHRONICLE.

*Murder of the Crew of the ship Atahualpa.*—Some weeks since, a short and imperfect account was given in the papers relative to the unfortunate capt. Porter and crew, while trading on the North West Coast.—We are now enabled by the politeness of Mr. Joel Richardson, who was Armorer on board, to give a correct narrative of the murder of capt. Oliver Porter, his two mates, Mr. Lyman Plumer, and six seamen belonging to the ship Atahualpa, of Boston.

The ship Atahualpa left Boston in August 1803, bound to the North West Coast of America, for the purpose of trading with the natives. She arrived safe on the coast in January 1804, and after visiting several islands and purchasing skins, on the 5th of June 1805, weighed anchor from Chocknoe, on the N. W. Coast, and made sail. On the 8th, arrived at Milbank Sound, and came to an anchor within musket shot of the village.—Soon after her arrival the chief of the Indians, by the name of Kiete, came off to the ship with [illegible] more of his tribe, and informed the captain that the Caroline, capt Sturgess, had sailed from thence 10 days before her arrival.

On the 11th, the chief again came off with his tribe, and another tribe that was there, and traded very briskly till towards night—[illegible] then becoming very insolent, they were all turned out of the ship.

On the 13th, Kiete the chief, and his tribe again came on board in the morning, and seemed much more desirous to trade than before, which capt. Porter was very glad to see. The chief mate and two of the ship's company were then engaged in ripping the mainstay sail in pieces on the quarter deck; the