

“Commission of the Peace” (May 12, 1749)

(Copied from *Chesterfield, An Old Virginia County, Volume I, 1607-1954*, by Francis Earl Lutz)

The proclamation, with capitalization unchanged, but punctuation added for clarity, reads as follows:

Virginia

Sir William Gooch Baronet his Majesty’s Lieutenant Governor and Commander in chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia To William Kennon, John Bolling, William Gay, Richard Royall, William Kennon Jun., John Archer, Richard Eppes, Seth Ward, John Royall, William Eppes, Robert Goode, Henry Randolph, Edward Osborne Jun., and Richard Kennon of the County of Chesterfield, Gent. Greeting -----

KNOW YE that by Virtue of the Powers and Authorities to me granted by his Majesty as Commander in chief of this Dominion I have with the Advice and Consent of the Council assigned you and everyone of you jointly and severally the King’s Justices to keep his Peace in the County of Chesterfield and do in his Majesty’s name require you to keep or cause to be kept all Ordinances and Statutes of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Laws of this Colony and Dominion of Virginia made for the good of the Peace and for the Conservation of the same and for the quiet Rule and Government of the people in all and every the Articles thereof in the said County according to the Force, Form and Effect of the same and to chastise and punish all persons offending against the forms of those Ordinances and Statutes of the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Laws of the Colony and any of them in the County aforesaid; to cause to come before you or any of you all those Persons who shall threaten any of the King’s liege People either in their Bodys or burning their Houses to find sufficient security of the Peace or for their good behavior toward the King and the People and if they refuse to find such security then to cause them to be kept safe in Prison until they find such security. I have also assigned you or any four or more of you whereof any of you William Kennon, John Bolling, William Gay, Richard Royall, William Kennon Jun., John Archer and Richard Eppes shall be one to meet at the usual Place of holding Courts in the County aforesaid at certain Days according to Law and to hear and determine all such Controversies and Debates between Party and Party doing therein what to Justice appertaineth according to the Laws of the Kingdom of Great Britain and this Colony and Dominion of Virginia with Power likewise to you and every one of you to take Depositions ***** upon oath for the better manifestation of the Truth in all such Matters and Causes as come before you and to keep or cause to be kept all Orders of the Court, Orders of Council and Proclamations directed to you or coming to your hands from the King or myself or from the Commander in chief for the time being and the Council of State and to punish all Offenders and Breakers of the same according to the Laws of the Kingdom of Great Britain and of the Colony and Dominion AND FURTHER to keep or cause the Clerk of your Court to keep records or all Judgements, Rules and Orders decided upon and agreed upon by you or any four or more of you whereof any of you the last mentioned Justices shall be one AND FURTHER I do in the King’s Name command you and every one of you that you diligently intend the keeping of the Peace Statutes of the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Laws of this Colony and Dominion and all and singular other Promises. I do also by virtue of these Presents command the Sheriff of the said County of Chesterfield that at those certain Days and Places which the Law doth appoint to cause to come before you or any four or more of you whereof any of you the last mentioned Justices shall be one such and so many good and lawful men of his Bailiwick by whom the Truth of the Matter shall be the better known and enquired of. GIVEN under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony at the Council Chamber in Williamsburg the 12th Day of May one thousand and seven hundred and forty-nine in the twenty-second year of the Reign of our sovereign Lord King George the second.

SEAL

WILLIAM GOOCH