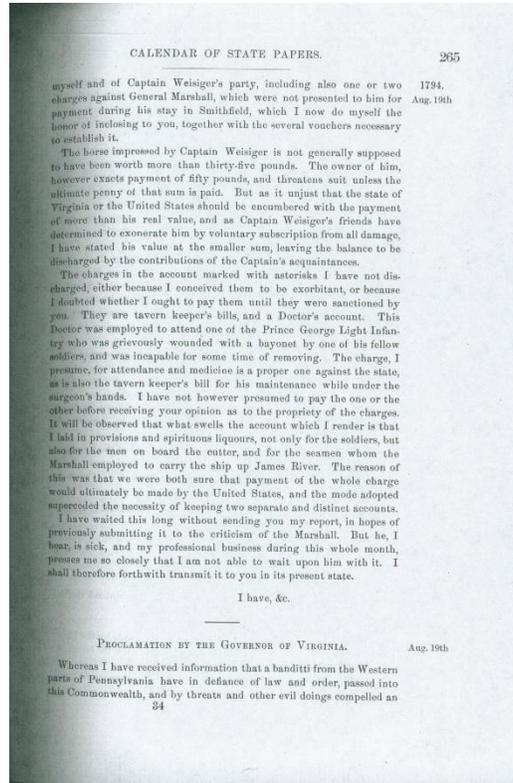


## ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY MARCH 3



**On March 3, 1791, Congress passed a federal excise tax on whiskey, which led to the Whiskey Rebellion.**

**CSO: SS.8.21, ELA.8.1, ELA.8.5**

**Investigate the Document: (*Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol VII, p. 265-268*)**

1. Summarize in your own words the Proclamation by the Governor of Virginia (2-3 sentences). What issue(s) is the government facing in the aftermath of the whiskey tax? What does he proclaim is necessary to combat these issues?
2. Are the expressed convictions of the governor consistent with actual observable actions of the Virginia populace? Cite a specific passage where the governor states his beliefs about the banditti's intentions.
3. How did the Monongalia County tax collector responsible for collecting the excise on whiskey feel about his well-being? What was he eventually forced to do?
4. According to the document, what might happen in the Ohio Country if the rebellion was not snuffed out in neighboring Pennsylvania?

**Think Critically:** What can you learn from firsthand accounts of historical events that you cannot learn through other means? What are the broader implications of the Whiskey Rebellion? What was the purpose of the whiskey tax? Why did distillers' rebel against it?

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myself and of Captain Weisiger's party, including also one or two charges against General Marshall, which were not presented to him for payment during his stay in Smithfield, which I now do myself the honor of inclosing to you, together with the several vouchers necessary to establish it. 1794.  
Aug. 19th

The horse impressed by Captain Weisiger is not generally supposed to have been worth more than thirty-five pounds. The owner of him, however exacts payment of fifty pounds, and threatens suit unless the ultimate penny of that sum is paid. But as it unjust that the state of Virginia or the United States should be encumbered with the payment of more than his real value, and as Captain Weisiger's friends have determined to exonerate him by voluntary subscription from all damage, I have stated his value at the smaller sum, leaving the balance to be discharged by the contributions of the Captain's acquaintances.

The charges in the account marked with asterisks I have not discharged, either because I conceived them to be exorbitant, or because I doubted whether I ought to pay them until they were sanctioned by you. They are tavern keeper's bills, and a Doctor's account. This Doctor was employed to attend one of the Prince George Light Infantry who was grievously wounded with a bayonet by one of his fellow soldiers, and was incapable for some time of removing. The charge, I presume, for attendance and medicine is a proper one against the state, as is also the tavern keeper's bill for his maintenance while under the surgeon's hands. I have not however presumed to pay the one or the other before receiving your opinion as to the propriety of the charges. It will be observed that what swells the account which I render is that I laid in provisions and spirituous liquours, not only for the soldiers, but also for the men on board the cutter, and for the seamen whom the Marshall employed to carry the ship up James River. The reason of this was that we were both sure that payment of the whole charge would ultimately be made by the United States, and the mode adopted superceded the necessity of keeping two separate and distinct accounts.

I have waited this long without sending you my report, in hopes of previously submitting it to the criticism of the Marshall. But he, I hear, is sick, and my professional business during this whole month, presses me so closely that I am not able to wait upon him with it. I shall therefore forthwith transmit it to you in its present state.

I have, &c.

PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

Aug. 19th

Whereas I have received information that a banditti from the Western parts of Pennsylvania have in defiance of law and order, passed into this Commonwealth, and by threats and other evil doings compelled an

1794. officer of the United States living in Morgan Town, in the County of  
 Aug. 19th Monongalia, to abandon his home and seek personal safety by flight;  
 And whereas I have reason to believe that the said banditti are a part  
 of that deluded combination of men described in the President's procla-  
 mation of the 7th day of this present month, who, forgetful of all obliga-  
 tions human and divine, seem intent only on rapine and anarchy, and  
 therefore endeavour by their emissaries and other illegal means to seduce  
 the good people of this Commonwealth inhabiting the Country border-  
 ing on the state of Pennsylvania, to unite with them in schemes and  
 measures tending to destroy the tranquility and order which so happily  
 prevails, and thereby to convert the blessings we so eminently enjoy  
 under our free and equal government into the most afflicting miseries  
 which can possibly befall the human race.

To arrest these wicked designs; to uphold the majesty of the law; to  
 preserve our fellow citizens from evil and our country from disgrace, I  
 have thought proper, by and with the advice of the council of State, to  
 issue this my proclamation calling on all officers, civil and military, to  
 exercise with zeal, dilligence and firmness, every legal power vested in  
 them respectively for the purpose of detecting and bringing to trial  
 every offender or offenders in the premises.

And I do moreover specially require and enjoin that all persons com-  
 ing into this Commonwealth from that part of our sister State, at pre-  
 sent so unhappily distracted, be particularly watched, and if they shall  
 be found disseminating their wicked and pernicious doctrines, or in any  
 way exciting a spirit of disobedience to government, thereby violating  
 the peace and dignity of this Commonwealth, that they be immediately  
 apprehended and dealt with according to law.

Given under my hand as Governor, and under the seal of the Common-  
 wealth, at Richmond, this twentieth day of August, in the year of our  
 Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, and of the Common-  
 wealth the nineteenth.

HENRY LEE.

Aug. 20th

J. DAWSON TO JAMES WOOD.

Staunton

Wm. Patton was appointed one of the agents to superintend the col-  
 lection of the monies due to the Commonwealth.

He has not received his commission.

A recommendation of a sheriff was some time since made by the Court  
 of Bath. Dean was the first nomination, and appears to be much  
 worked for by the court and county.

No commission has come to hand. I must request your earnest atten-  
 tion to these things. And am, &c.

EDWARD CARRINGTON TO THE GOVERNOR.

1794.

I have just received from Mr. Edward Smith, Inspector of the 5th Survey in this District, the enclosed letter dated the 17th Instant. Aug. 20th  
Supervisor's  
office,  
Richmond

I beg leave to call your attention, sir, to the intelligence which it contains of practices by the Insergents in Pennsylvania, by Emissaries and open parties, for suppressing the execution of the Excise Laws in the county of Monongalia, and uniting in the Insurgency the people of that county; and of the symptoms of defection which have discovered themselves in some, though not the generality of those people.

Your Excellency will also observe in the letter of Mr. Smith, a paragraph mentioning with some degree of uncertainty, that probably Emissaries from the Insurgents have been in Winchester, for the purpose of purchasing ammunition, which you may be of opinion merits further enquiry.

I have, &c.

Winchester, Aug. 17th, 1794.

Sir,

Your despatches rec'd at this place, having returned a few days since without being able even to proceed to Margan Town with any degree of propriety.

According to my intention communicated to you in my duplicate letter to the Commissioners of Revenue, I sat out for Morgan Town, and proceed to the neighborhood of the mountains, where I rec'd a letter from the collector from that county, containing the following paragraph:

"I am threatened from all quarters in my own county, and the Pennsylvanians came into our Town and ordered me to give up my papers, or they would come and destroy them with all my property; in the meantime no collection can go on, as our distillers will not pay 'till they see the event."

Having other business in the county I then was, and hearing continually unfavorable accounts, I waited a few days to determine on future measures; in that time, I was informed the Collector had been obliged to fly his home, which proved to be the case; in consequence whereof, I thought it necessary to have a meeting with the Collector, who had come below the mountains. He informed me he had received a fictitious signature to a letter threatening him, that if he did not resign his comm'n, they would be at his house on a certain night and destroy everything he had. In consequence, with the advice of his friends, he fled for safety. They fulfilled their promise on the night preceeding the one appointed. A considerable party came in pursuit of him, but did not destroy his property. Weaver informed me that they bring whiskey from Penn-

1794. sylvania in the most open manner, bidding defiance to a seizure. He  
 Aug. 20th further informed me that my intended visit was well known, and that  
 he is confident that I should have been in the hands of the Pennsylvanians in a very short time after my arrival at Morgan Town. Under these various circumstances, I deemed it needless to proceed, and concluded that the most prudent measures should be taken to prevent any avowed opposition by the Virginians, which perhaps my presence might occasion. I have wrote to Mr. Biggs fully on the subject of my intended visit, and at the same time admitting the justification of the suspension of the payment of the duties at this time, to communicate fully to the People the object of my letter, and to caution them against wantonly engaging in the lawless proceedings of their neighbours.

From the best information I can receive from the counties of Harrison and Randolph, I believe the People to be temperate on this business, and if prudently managed, I have no fear of their defection, indeed the influented part of Monongalia I am convinced, are well disposed, and attribute the threats rec'd to some of the rabble who have nothing to lose, as it is natural to expect on such occasions that every worthless fellow will wish to appear of consequence. I am, therefore, pretty confident, that if proper measures are persued against the Pennsylvanians, these People will remain quiet.

I am entirely uninformed of the state of matters in Ohio; my conjectures are, that many are friends to the opposition and perhaps some have been so imprudent as to associate themselves in it, but I expect that no officer appearing amongst them, by which they might form a pretext for opposition, they will be passive until the event of Pennsylvania is Known; but if this evil is not eventually rooted out, the flame will spread most readily. Some of the Distillers in Hampshire & Hardy, which join the boundaries of Monongalia express their doubts of longer paying the duties, and would embrace the earliest opportunity of non-compliance if they could calculate on protection in their opposition.

The reports we receive from Pennsylvania infer a continuance of their rebellious proceedings, and we have reason to believe that emissaries have been in this Town who have purchased a considerable quantity of Amunition. Commissions are sent by the President to negotiate, but I am afraid it will add fuel to the flame, as reason must vanish when a mob governs.

You will please inform me whether I shall remit you the Cash in hand, or hold it for its first purpose; if the former, I shall be glad if you can accommodate a draft on me for 3,000 dollars, as it is very difficult to procure Bank notes for remittance.

I am, &c.,

EDWARD SMITH.

P. S.—The Express delivered your dispatches on Saturday noon & have dispatched him Sunday 8 o'clock.

Col. Edw'd Carrington, Supervisor of Revenue, Richmond.