

April 25, 1974

The first meeting of the representatives of the Tri-county Bicentennial Committee was held in the Somerset County Commissioners office in Princess Anne, Maryland, on April 25, 1974, at 8:00 P.M. Present were Mr. John Jeffries and Mr. Morris Furniss, Somerset representatives; Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Brittingham, Worcester representatives; and Mr. John Jacob, Mr. Gary Boggs, and Mrs. Sylvia Bradley, Wicomico representatives.

Since this was the first meeting of this group and its purpose was to explore avenues of mutual interest and action for the forthcoming Bicentennial observance, much of the discussion was devoted to sharing plans the individual County committees have made thus far and attempting to establish the feasibility of joint ventures. The following ideas were discussed at some length:

1. Somerset has plans for listing all early churches in that County in a tourist-type brochure. It was suggested that this might be expanded to include all churches in the three Counties and possibly adding old homes to the tour list. A question was raised by Mrs. Bradley as to whether this could be further developed into guided tours, at periodic intervals, with college students acting as tour guides. Mrs. Brittingham announced that the Worcester County committee plans to print maps of the bicycle "View Trail" with historic sites marked. This might be a model for similar Somerset and Wicomico projects. Mr. Jacob suggested and the committee agreed that the tourism sub-committee of the three Counties should meet together to plan for this and any other joint tourist projects.

2. Mr. Jacob reported that at a recent statewide meeting of County chairmen, it was suggested that September 5, 1974, since it is the 200th anniversary of the convening of the First Continental Congress, should be the official kick-off date for Bicentennial celebrations. Wicomico County is making plans with the Wicomico Council of the Arts and the Salisbury State College drama department for some sort of dramatic presentation. This could become a joint effort in that it may be performed in all three Counties. Also, school music departments might become involved in it. This could be coordinated by the Festival Sub-committee from the three Counties.

3. An effort to construct a life-size reproduction of one of the "barges" involved in the 1782 Battle of the Barges in Somerset waters has been investigated by Mr. Jacob and Mr. Jeffries. However, so far it has been most difficult to find working plans for the construction of such a vessel. Also, Mr. Jacob estimates the cost for construction, crewing and maintenance would be approximately \$50,000.00. The committee felt that they could further study the feasibility of this project, but that they would not wish to make a commitment to it at this time.

4. Several suggestions regarding publications were discussed. The question was raised as to whether a joint history of Worcester-Somerset-Wicomico Counties should be commissioned covering the period of 1700 - 1742, but there was no resolution on this question. It was felt that joint efforts toward publication of a reproduction of the 1877 atlas of the lower shore area, to be sold as sheets or as bound copies, may be possible.

5. Exhibits were also discussed; any such exhibits planned by the three Counties might be shown jointly on occasion. Wicomico has an exhibit of "uniforms" currently being planned.

6. Mr. Jacob also suggested the possibility of the National Guard units in the three Counties forming a joint marching unit. Mr. Brittingham thought that young people might do that sort of thing, being organized by secondary school music departments.

In conclusion, the committee agreed that the three Counties should take some sort of joint action on the following points:

1. Picking September 5, 1974, as the beginning date for the Bicentennial Festival with the production of an evening show consisting of a dramatic sketch by Wicomico, with choral and instrumental music of the Revolutionary period supplied by Worcester and Somerset with the show produced at least two nights in each County.

2. Consideration and possible sponsorship of publications referring to all three Counties, especially the 1877 Atlas.

3. Tourist guidelines.

4. Investigation of the possibilities of the construction of a barge.

5. Coordination of exhibits.

The next meeting of the joint committee will be held in Princess Anne on May 30, 1974.