

THE BLOODY ELECTION OF 1742

BY WILLIAM T. PARSONS*

SOME time before the October election of Assembly members in 1742, Samuel Burge, a sadler in Philadelphia, went to the Jersey Market with a friend, John Langdale. Meeting Doctor Thomas Bond, one of William Allen's Proprietary supporters, they spoke of the upcoming election. Bond criticized the Quaker faction who had obstructed the voting place for several previous elections, but suggested that things would be different in 1742 and called Captain Joseph Redmond to verify this. Burge challenged Captain Redmond, "'Tis reported you are to bring a Number of Sailors to the Election; but if you do, you will find there will be enough Men of Spirit to fling them and you over the Rails."¹

On September 30, a Philadelphia Quaker shipjoiner, Nicholas Cassel, worked on Captain John Spence's ship *Medley Frigate* at Burlington, New Jersey. In conversation with Spence, Cassel said he would not work October 1, for he planned to return to Philadelphia. Captain Spence responded, "You had better stay here, the Election will be Tomorrow, and there will be sad Work. You had better not go."² Ignoring this warning Cassel went to Philadelphia where early on the morning of the election he encountered thirty or forty sailors on a dockside street. Cassel went aboard Captain Redmond's ship *Surprise* to enquire of his friend, Matthew Pinard, "What are the Men going to do?" "They are going to the Court-house; they have provided Sticks and put them on board the Brigantine," was Pinard's disquieting answer. When the milling sailors came past the Jersey Market, with members of Spence's crew among them, Cassel "apprehended there

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¹ *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1752-1776), III, 583.

² *Ibid.*, III, 577; *The Pennsylvania Gazette* [Philadelphia], October 23, 1742.

would be Mischief and kept out of their way.”³ In the resulting fracas Richard Hockley, a member of the Proprietary faction, reported, “Blood flew plentifully about,” then added, “I never saw such havock in my Life before.”⁴

Of course, politics and violence have sometimes gone hand in hand on the American scene, but a local election in the City of Brotherly Love seemed hardly a logical locale. Because the 1742 Election riot in Philadelphia is so well documented, historical analysis of the affair may prove of some value today.⁵

The riot was an incident of the larger political scene of the 1740's. After a decade of relative political calm, punctuated only by the intense personal rivalries of the time, during which the influence of local Quakers diminished greatly, John Kinsey and Isaac Norris II joined with other Friends to re-establish a major Quaker voice in Pennsylvania government. They considered this course the best guarantee of continued personal and political rights for all Pennsylvanians, particularly for members of the Society of Friends.⁶

Central to the revival of Quaker influence was an alliance with naturalized Germans who enjoyed political rights in Pennsylvania. Both parties recognized the importance of the support of these German voters, but Isaac Norris had certain advantages in gaining their allegiance. He actively supported full citizenship rights for the Germans, as had his father in the preceding decade. The Norris family had also made land available to these Germans for rent or purchase, and loaned them money or made business arrangements with them. Finally, on matters which concerned the

³ *Notes*, III, 577, 583.

⁴ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742. Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, III, 241, HSP.

⁵ A recent account of this incident, Norman S. Cohen, “The Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XCII (July 1968), 306-319, is partisan and somewhat inaccurate. Since Mr. Cohen has consulted much of the available evidence, including the Assembly hearings relative to the riots and several private letters which are pertinent, the writer is tempted to conclude that he either did not recognize the significance of his evidence, or, even more unfortunate, that he chose to suppress evidence which failed to support his conclusions.

⁶ William Allen to Thomas Penn, October 24, 1741, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 201, HSP; Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, “Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XI (1954), 394; Theodore Thayer, *Israel Pemberton, King of the Quakers* (Philadelphia, 1943), 46.

German element, such as land rights, voting rights, exemption from military assignments and enlistment of servants, Norris' position in Assembly closely approximated theirs. In fact, during the summer months of 1742, Norris led the Assembly fight to gain full inheritance rights for widows and orphans of deceased naturalized German landholders.⁷

Political differences between the Governor and his Quaker Assembly multiplied between 1739 and 1742. On military expenses and the enlistment of indentured servants (which Governor George Thomas promoted without Assembly support), the Assembly hardly budged. After all, Friends and the pietist segment of their German supporters held scruples against military service.⁸ Thomas attempted to keep the matter clear of religious issues, but failed. One executive solution lay in seating Proprietary adherents in the Assembly. William Allen did not run in 1740, but decided shortly after, "As things have turned out, it was wrong Judged in several of us to leave the Assembly." He attempted to seat loyal supporters of the governor and did bring out a record turnout of voters in 1740. "On our side, upwards of 200 more than had ever lost, [but these Quaker] creatures by their dextrous knack of lying brought down upon us about 400 Germans who hardly ever came to elections formerly." He then estimated that not more than forty of those four hundred Germans had ever voted before. Allen made no claims in March 1741, that unnaturalized Germans voted, he just blamed a financial self-interest. "The Dutch are a sordid people and very loth to part with any money."⁹

William Allen, Richard Peters and Governor George Thomas exerted themselves to end the Quaker-German coalition, or at least to diminish its influence. To that end they enlisted the aid of such prominent men as Conrad Weiser who sent an appeal "To our Countrymen the Germans in Pennsylvania," urging sup-

⁷ Isaac Norris II to Laurence Williams, November 20, 1739, Norris Letters, 1733-39, 63; Governor George Thomas to [John] Penn, June 4, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 219, HSP.

⁸ Isaac Norris II to Robert Charles, October 11, 1740, Norris Letters 1719-56, 1, HSP; *Votes*, III, 390-400.

⁹ William Allen to John Penn, March 27, 1741, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 143, HSP.

port for the Penn government which had initially granted rights to German settlers.¹⁰

Allen had some success in Philadelphia where the election of six of his candidates to the Common Council angered Quaker leaders. "About ten of them, among which you may imagine, there was Preston, Pemberton, Norris, Morris, Dilwyn, Mickle and Mifflin, rose from their seats and left us in the greatest fury." But Allen had little success in controlling or even limiting Kinsey and Norris in the Assembly; and the voters of the province continued to elect anti-proprietary Quakers to that body.

The rift between the factions widened, so that in June 1742, Governor Thomas reported to John Penn, "These Gentlemen are far from being satisfied . . . they publickly threaten you with a Petition to the King to take the Government out of your hands."¹²

The Courthouse in High (or Market) Street, Philadelphia, across Second Street from the Jersey Market, served as the polling-place for all of Philadelphia County, including the entire present day Philadelphia, Montgomery and Berks Counties. That area contained several thousand eligible voters, but those who lived more than twenty-five miles from the Delaware River found it very difficult to travel to the voting place and consequently rarely voted.

Since 1738 a contest of physical endurance was added, in the "trial for the stairs." Voting officials on a balcony at the front of the courthouse received a ticket from each voter indicating his choice of candidates. Citizens delivered their tickets up a flight of stairs from the street level to the balcony, then walked down the stairs on the opposite side. From 1738 to 1741, the Quaker Party managed to fill the stairs and the approaches to them.

¹⁰ Conrad Weiser, *Ein Wohl-gemeindter und Ernstlicher Rath an unsere Lands-Leute, die Teutschen* (Philadelphia, 1741), 1-2; Translation of a Printed Paper published by Conrad Weiser, September 20, 1741, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 195, HSP. Weiser reiterated the wisdom of unity among German-speaking citizens (solten wir vereinigt seyn . . . dann wan ein Hause mit ihm selbst uneins ist, kann es nicht bestehen,) and warned of Quaker misrepresentations that the alternative to Quaker rule was slavery (Dass wofern ihr nicht Quaker erwehlet zu Assembly Maenner, werdet ihr wieder in Schlawerey gebracht werden.)

¹¹ William Allen to Thomas Penn, October 24, 1741, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 201, HSP.

¹² M S Journal of Isaac Norris, II, 1742, bound with *Taylor's Almanack, 1742* (Philadelphia, 1741), and George Thomas to John Penn, June 4, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 219, HSP. Actually no petition was ever sent.

allowing favorable voters to slip through but jostling and crowding those of the opposition. As election day approached in 1742, rumors spread that the fight for the stairs would assume more vigorous proportions than ever.¹³

Displeased and distressed by the successes of the Quaker Party at the polls in 1740 and 1741, William Allen led Proprietary Party efforts to reverse the annual losses. "I cannot say what success we may have, but we are resolved to have another tryal with them this next election; they shall not have it to say that they were chose without opposition," he wrote to England. "They will, I believe have a warm one if we can secure the germans or divide them. I believe we shall outnumber them." What Allen then added, later sounded like a lightly-veiled threat, "No means that are fair will be left unessayed to bring the election to a good issue."¹⁴

In a preview of later colonial election campaigns in Pennsylvania, printed appeals to the voter appeared shortly before voting day. On behalf of the Proprietary Party, an appeal "to the Free-Holders" of Pennsylvania justified actions of the governor. It criticized incumbent Assembly members as "Enemies to the publick Peace, Enemies to the Publick Welfare" who placed "Gratification of their private Resentments . . . over all other Considerations, . . . so Artful as to cover their real Designs under a pretense of Zeal for the publick Good." Using a Militia Law "to alarm us with Designs upon our Liberties, . . . calling that an Invasion of our religious and civil Rights," Quakers resorted "to falsehood to get themselves returned." The pamphleteer predicted dire consequences, "One may, Without a Spirit of Prophecy, pronounce our excellent Constitution will soon be at an End."¹⁵ The Assembly response stood on the record of "Resolution and a Firmness proper to withstand Attempts [on] some of your most valuable Privileges." The Quaker Party rested its case with a warning, "Unity and Peace are indeed desirable, but not at the Expense of *Liberty*: And since even the *Religion of Peace* exhorts

¹³ Leonard, "Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania," 393.

¹⁴ William Allen to [Thomas?] Penn, July 8, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 227, HSP.

¹⁵ *To the Free-Holders of the Province of Pennsylvania* [Philadelphia, 1742], 1-3. Again, as in Weiser's appeal of 1741 on behalf of executive leadership, the author of the pamphlet urged unity, citing the same example, "A Country divided against itself must be ruined."

us to *contend earnestly* for the Faith, 'tis hoped a moderate *Contention* for the Blessing next in Value, will not be blameable."¹⁶

Additional rumors told of numerous Pennsylvania Germans "said not to be properly qualified," who would appear for the Quaker Party, possibly to vote fraudulently, or just to swell the pro-Quaker crowd. William Allen grossly underestimated the number of Germans eligible, while William Parsons and Nicholas Scull made certain that scores of unnaturalized Germans appeared at the place of election.¹⁷

Debate over voting qualifications made more critical the choice of Inspectors of Election, the first order of business each election day. The brief provincial experiment in voting reform from 1739 to 1741, which saw Inspectors chosen by the constable of each ward, had failed of renewal in the Assembly. One of the election campaign pamphlets pointed out the dangers posed by Assembly inaction, "The *Act for chusing Inspectors*, which is so necessary to prevent Tumults and preserve the Freedom of our Elections, is expired." Consequently, "Inspectors were to be chosen the old way, of that by view," which required that voters literally stand behind the Inspectors of their choice.¹⁸

In election eve meetings, Allen confidently rejoiced in Quaker concessions to compromise, each party to select four Inspectors. Proprietary leaders were furious when the Quaker Party rebuffed Allen's candidates and disowned the compromise settlement. Pemberton later said he could not have agreed to an illegal compromise. Samuel Norris reported one firm decision, "It had been agreed, at a large meeting the Night before, not to carry either Sticks or Canes to the Election." Some proprietary leaders dis-

¹⁶ *A Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia* [Philadelphia, 1742], 1-2.

¹⁷ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 241, HSP; *Votes*, III, 564, 567-568. In 1740 William Allen conceded 400 Germans were naturalized and voting; on the eve of the 1742 election, he stated that no more than 400 naturalized Germans had a right to vote, a major miscalculation.

¹⁸ *To the Free-Holders of Pennsylvania*, 2; Hockley to Penn, November 1, 1742, Penn Papers, Off. Corr., III, 241, HSP; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 7, 1742; Leonard, "Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania," 394-396. Maneuvering for position in the crowded street had produced sentiment for reform after the 1738 election. The Quaker Assembly's decision to abandon the newer law resulted from Proprietary control of city government, with power to appoint Inspectors of Election under the 1739 law. The Quaker Party had the numerical strength to sweep all eight posts, using the older method.

cussed the advantage of flooding the election square with sailors to counter the large numbers of Germans expected. Privately, two men contracted to have several dozen sailors visit the election place.¹⁹

The bitter climax of this political struggle was the incident called "The Bloody Election of 1742," when physical violence flared, accompanying the balloting for the third time in four years. At seven o'clock on election morning, October 1, 1742, voters and interested spectators began to gather "in the Market Place" for both City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia County elections. Israel Pemberton and several other Quakers walked about the area ready to call attention to any Proprietary party irregularity, for rumors persisted that William Allen planned a surprise for the Quaker Party. By nine o'clock when voting was scheduled to begin, great crowds had gathered, including many more Germans than ordinarily came. Because of the rumors of impending trouble, Mayor Clement Plumsted and other city officials requested that no weapons or canes be carried by the assembled voters.

Among the Quaker candidates for Inspector of Election was Isaac Norris who also stood for the Assembly from Philadelphia County. In a similar dual candidacy William Allen led the Proprietary candidates. A suggestion that all persons clear the square to facilitate voting produced no movement by Quaker partisans who would not give up their place at the stairs. A call for all those favoring William Allen for Inspector produced a small movement; following his objections to obstructive tactics, a lane was cleared and one more voter joined Allen. Then on a call for those in favor of Norris as Inspector a major movement of English-speaking and German-speaking voters literally backed his candidacy.²⁰

Meanwhile a gathering of sailors, estimated variously at fifty to eighty men, accompanied by three Masters, James Mitchell,

¹⁹ *Votes*, III, 568, 573-574, 582, 586; Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 28-32, HSP. The name of John Leshar, acceptable to the Proprietary Party, was proposed for Inspector, but he declined to run since he had not been naturalized.

²⁰ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 7, 1742; *Votes*, III, 564-589. Newspaper coverage of the event was uneven. Franklin's *Gazette* carried a brief account; Bradford's *American Weekly Mercury* remained silent. Christopher Saur's *Pennsylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber* for that period has not survived, so we lack a published German account of the incident. With or without newspaper notices, it proved to be a memorable occasion.

John Spence and Joseph Redmond, had stopped just down the Jersey Shambles, within sight of the election process. Some of these same sailors had gathered after dawn "at Andrew Hamilton's Wharf with Clubbs in their hands." As strangers in town, a fact confirmed by many citizens, the sailors had no right to interfere in any way and objections arose. "Some ill Consequence was apprehended if they should be suffered to mix, with their Clubs, among the Inhabitants," but each time Allen, as Recorder, was requested to send the sailors away, he saw no reason to interfere.²¹

Violence erupted as the sailors mixed in, according to Benjamin Franklin, when the voters "had just begun the Choice of Inspectors." Another witness, a Philadelphia cooper named Wight Massey, also noticed the timing. "The Sailors were Strangers and [I] never heard they had, or pretended to have, any Provocation, but fell on violently as soon as Isaac Norris was chosen Inspector, as if they had a Watch-word." Other persons present at the election remembered numerous incidents and comments which accompanied the bold attack. Approached by citizens who called his attention to the violent outbreak, Allen, who had moved around the corner of a building, responded several times that the sailors had as much right at the place of election as "the unnaturalized Dutch" had. Several Magistrates had attempted to reason with the sailors, to convince them to return to their ships before trouble broke out, but they were unsuccessful. "Mr. Morris, as a Magistrate went to command peace, and he was knock'd down, had two severe wounds in his head, and had he not crept under the stalls, I [Richard Hockley] believe he would have been kill'd." They "assaulted the freeholders" and generally performed in a manner that shocked those who had gathered to vote.²²

After the sailors reached the courthouse, they temporarily withdrew. Away from the center of the riot, Thomas Burgess, a merchant, approached some of the sailors and said "Brothers, you'd better go on board your Ships or you'll be in bad Bread

²¹ Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 29, HSP; *Votes*, III, 574, 582. Captain James Mitchell had arrived just before the election with his ship, *Happy Return*, from Londonderry. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 7, 1742.

²² *Ibid.*: Peters to Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 29, and Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Rec., III, 241, HSP; *Votes*, III, 579.

before Night." He had hoped to calm the situation, but the sailors responded, "Damn you, we have nothing to say to you, but to the Broad-brims and Dutch Dogs." Near Second and Chestnut, Captain Redmond, whose intent was quite the opposite of that of Burgess, rallied the seamen and called to one of them, "Damn you, go and knock those Dutch Sons of Bitches off the Steps." Another of the sailors was heard to say, "There goes a Parcel of Quaker Sons of Bitches; they are the Men we want, Men with broad Hats and no Pockets." The sailors headed back on Second Street toward Market while Redmond went up Strawberry Alley. On arrival, they renewed the attack more viciously than before.²³

The Philadelphia population, "in a kind of Amaze" at first, were shocked further by the renewal of violence. "Old Mr. Pemberton, Tom Lloyd, Shadd the Barber, and one Evans of North Wales" were all injured to some degree, the latter, "an old Quaker of upwards of 60 years, . . . lost his Senses . . . by the Wounds he received on his head." The *Gazette* reported that several were "carried off for dead." Richard Peters was profoundly shocked, "It was a Miracle there were none killed." Samuel Preston at the age of seventy-eight, who had been active in Friends affairs and in private and public business, and had been a warm personal friend of William Penn, the founder, also received harsh treatment in the riots. "Old Sam'l Preston would have been certainly killed, had it not been for Captain Harry Hodge who fended off the blow and gott much hurt himself."²⁴

As if personal injury were not enough, the seamen then turned to the destruction of property. "They took up great stones and bricks . . . and broke the Court house Windows all to pieces." Some persons within the building were showered with flying glass or struck glancing blows by the stones themselves. No election in Pennsylvania had ever been marred by this kind of affair.

Thomas Leech, Assemblyman of the Quaker Party although he

²³ *Votes*, III, 578-579, 583.

²⁴ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 241, and Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 28-32, HSP; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 7, 1742; Hubertis Cummings, *Richard Peters, Provincial Secretary and Cleric* (Philadelphia, 1944), 75-79.

was Anglican, found himself under attack halfway up the stairs to cast his vote. Profoundly shocked, he called for those inside the Courthouse to hand out staves for defense of those on the stairs. As sailors pursued the fleeing citizens, Leech organized the counterattack, "Let us everyone arm with Billets of Wood or anyThing that comes to Hand, and drive these Sailors off the Ground." In a very short time, "the Dutch and other Country People" did just that, picked up makeshift weapons in "the neighbouring Woodpiles," moved into the square "with Clubbs," and "drove the Sailors before them." The Pennsylvania Germans "were for getting Guns but were prevented." They still provided the main force that drove the sailors from the area. Richard Peters, not at all enthusiastic for the Quaker candidates, noted in his description that "several magnanimous heroes [including] Young Israel Pemberton, Isaac Griffitts, Sam Norris and other young men of that stamp" arrived to assist the Germans. According to Peters, "There was no man but thought worse of Israel and his fellows than of the rioters," but few shared his views. Many more persons blamed Allen than blamed Pemberton, Norris or Griffitts. While it was true that when one of the retreating sailors passed William Allen, shouting, "Let's give Mr. Allen a Whorrah!" Allen firmly declined, "Ye Villains begone, I'll have nothing to do with you." But it was also true that, called upon to disperse the sailors, he insisted again, "They have as much right here as the unnaturalized Germans."²⁵

When the sailors retreated to their ships, the citizenry followed; and, after some searching, dragged fifty-four rioters off to jail before nightfall. In the midst of the melee, William Hudson had challenged several sailors, "You have no Right to come and disturb a peaceable Election." One sailor shouted back, "We came to fight for *William Allen*, and by God, we will." Moreover, ships owned jointly by Allen, Plumsted and Turner were in port, and Captain Redmond, the person supposed to have "sett the people on," was associated with John Spence and the Plumsteds.²⁶ In the course of election day, word spread that William Allen and

²⁵ *Votes*, III, 574-576, 583-585; Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 28-32, HSP.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; "Ship Registers in the Port of Philadelphia," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, XXIV (1900), 112, 212; M S Journal of Isaac Norris, II, 1742, HSP.

his political associates had incited the sailors. This also seemed to explain why "not one Magistrate of the Governour's appointment stirred one inch to suppress the Rioters, but walk'd off the ground." The Quaker leadership stood to benefit from the incident. People "publickly said that Mr. Plumsted, Mr. Allen and others of the governour's friends were at the bottom of this." Israel Pemberton openly accused Allen of plotting with the sailors.

The riots and reports of Allen's collusion certainly cost him heavily, for his election seemed probable otherwise. His three hundred thirty-six votes contrasted sharply with the seventeen hundred votes of successful candidates. Even many of his friends withheld their votes from him. At Benjamin Shoemaker's house "numbers came and alter'd their ticketts." Robert Moore said "above 300 ticketts had [Allen's] name dash'd out in his Shop." Indeed Mr. Allen did "suffer much as to popularity."²⁷

Following the riot a dispute arose concerning the disposition of the prisoners. Governor Thomas wished to have the trial in city court where the magistrates were generally of the governor's friends, while the Assembly argued that county court was the proper place. Before long however, all the sailors were simply released. Complaints circulated against Allen and his friends "for it afterwards appeared that [the sailors] had been privately employed in this work by some party leaders . . . to divert the established form of the constitution from its *peaceable order and course*."²⁸

The riots were now a political liability for William Allen and Governor George Thomas. The Assembly began an investigation into the affair, determined to exploit advantages gained in popular reaction against the riots. Many who were supporters of the proprietary interest could not condone the extremities of election disturbances. Kinsey and Norris led the Assembly action and

²⁷ *Votes*, III, 502-505; M S Journal of Isaac Norris II, 1742, and Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 241, HSP. In his Journal, Isaac Norris tallied the election results with evident personal satisfaction. "1742 Election—Philadelphia County: T. Leech 1793; Jno. Kinsey 1786; Robt. Jones 1786; Isaac Norris 1775; Edwd. Warner 1773; Owen Evans 1767; James Morris 1494; Jos. Trotter 1488; [then, failed of election:] W. Allen 336; J. Robeson 334."

²⁸ *Votes*, III, 512; Robert Proud, *The History of Pennsylvania in North America* (Philadelphia, 1798), II, 229.

Israel Pemberton also pushed hard for restraints on Allen and the governor.

William Allen, Clement Plumsted, Abraham Taylor, Joseph Turner and Septimus Robinson were charged with complicity or at least with permitting a riot to start. They were summoned to answer before the Assembly in its investigation of the circumstances of the riot. Taylor and Robinson denied the charges of neglect and immediately countered that Taylor had agreed to act if Isaac Norris, City Alderman as well as Assemblyman, would join him in dispersing the rioters, but "Mr. Norris remain'd as unconcern'd and . . . as unactive a Spectator of the Riot, and used as few Endeavors to quell the same as any Person present." Yet they were censured while Norris was excused.²⁹

Both Richard Peters and Richard Hockley had inside information on plans and preparations for the day. Assembly leadership suspected that Hockley knew details, so they asked him to appear. When Hockley was called to testify before the Assembly, he tried to avoid this duty, but was finally advised by Mayor Plumsted to appear and answer Assembly questions concerning his direct knowledge of the riots and of plans preliminary to the riot. Hockley solved the predicament by insisting that since he was "on Qualification," he could not justly "relate anything heard in the House of my Friends," but only what he "personally saw transacted." Isaac Norris "in his Sly artful manner" stated that Hockley should report conversations overheard as well as things seen, "in Honour to clear up the Characters if I cou'd, of some Gentlemen they had reason to suspect." Richard Hockley stated they should both be very cautious "whom we suspected without just foundation," then no reputations would be damaged. In fact, he perjured himself by denying knowledge he actually possessed,

²⁹ *Notes*, III, 502-505, 512. William Allen challenged the legality of the Assembly investigation. He demanded the right to face his accusers and to examine witnesses. At the time the right of the Assembly to undertake a legislative inquiry, where legal guaranties of the accused were not protected as in a court of law, was not clearly defined. Certainly the Assembly conducted a one-sided hearing, but there is no evidence to support Mr. Cohen's suggestion of collusion simply because of similarity in the wording of witnesses' statements at the hearing. Cohen, "Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742," 315. Today we are much more aware of the dangers attendant upon committee hearings than men were in 1742. Their hearings did bring out the fact that sailors had been imported in order to interfere with election processes; they erred in their method of assessing the blame.

which he promised to tell Thomas Penn when they next met.³⁰

Allen, Plumsted and Turner formally stated their complaints to the Assembly and to the Proprietor. Not only were the complainants innocent, but the "Pride and Vindictiveness" of Assembly leaders, determined "to Insult and Blacken such as have Steadiness and Resolution enough to Oppose them," really constituted the problem. He concluded "The Party opposed to Government here are not to be Reclaimed by any gentle Methods." All that was especially clear to Allen because "not Many have had a much greater Share in their Resentment than Your humble Servant."³¹ Governor George Thomas agreed with Allen's analysis. "The Party here is too obstinate to be convinced or reformed by anything . . . from the Lords of Trade, or from the King Himself." Assembly leaders, giving way to "the dictates of their unbounded Malice," would if necessary, sacrifice "the Proprietors, the Province or their own Society." Nothing would content this Assembly but the figure of the proprietary Governor licking "the Dust at their Feet." He resolved to concede slightly in hopes of gaining some Assembly concessions. "The People may thank themselves for their folly & obstinacy in chusing such a Sett of Hyprocritical Sordid Fellows."³²

Richard Hockley deprecated the violence no matter how great the faults of the Quakers. He reported with some pride to Thomas Penn that he had attended "neither of their Meetings in order to pitch upon the Representatives," and was subjected to derision as a result. But Hockley had known some of the details in advance and meticulously avoided involvement. "I was informed by some of the Governor's Friends what was intended and the consequences I dreaded have happened." Several times he promised to tell Penn the full account, "such an Account as you little

³⁰ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 18, 1742, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 243, HSP. Not only has Mr. Cohen incorrectly read the date of this letter, which he gives as October 18, 1742, but he reaches a conclusion most unfair to Hockley, who expressed belief in Allen's innocence, then wavered, and finally altered his opinion to say that Allen knew beforehand of the plan to use sailors. As noted, Hockley took extreme care to avoid mention of any of the gentlemen who, the night before elections, had discussed means of overcoming Quaker Party advantages.

³¹ William Allen to Thomas Penn, November 20, 1742, *ibid.*, III, 247.

³² Governor George Thomas to John Penn, November 17, 1742, *ibid.*, III, 245.

expect to hear," should time and chance permit, but he never put it in writing.³³

In Philadelphia in 1742 there was one great gossip who could not resist this opportunity to tell all. Richard Peters having heard of the same plans related to Hockley, did tell. "Joseph Turner and John Sober spoke to some Captains to have a number of Sailors ready in case they should be wanted to protect ye Minor Party from ye Insults of ye Superior Party; . . . this I have from those two Gentlemen in Confidence." So that was it. Not William Allen, but Joseph Turner, Allen's business partner, had arranged for the sailors who were well-suited to the crush of bodies in the street before the Courthouse, or on the stairs when needed. There is no evidence that Turner asked them to bring clubs, that idea probably originated with the sailors or their captains. But here was the substantive basis for the election-day rumors that violence might come.³⁴

Norris, not privy to the planning nor precisely aware who had arranged for the sailors, formed his own judgment, "'Twas really a horrid scene to see a parcell of Saylor kept hot and near drunk for ye purpose, let upon men entirely unarmed who were peaceably met under the Protection of ye Laws to Secure their most valuable Priviledges." Fully convinced that Allen was the most likely suspect, Norris managed the Assembly hearings in such a fashion as to suggest the culpability of Allen, even though no proof existed. A strange twist was the continual loud protestation of

³³ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1 and November 18, 1742, *ibid.*, III, 241, 243. Hockley simultaneously reported his success in securing rattlesnakes and wild turkeys which he sent as curiosities to England, but had no luck in obtaining "bear hams." There is no indication whether Hockley's final judgment was aimed at the Turner-Allen or the Kinsey-Norris faction. "When there's no true regard, I am afraid there's no real Forgiveness, and however the Interest of the Country may be cry'd up, I wish self Interest mayn't be at the bottom."

³⁴ Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, November 17, 1742, Peters Letterbook 1737-50, V, 28-32, HSP. Researchers versed in the personalities of Colonial Pennsylvania, 1742, might expect that Peters could not resist the temptation of revealing inside information. John Sober was also a substantial merchant who registered the fifty ton Brigantine *Sally* at Philadelphia, November 23, 1742, one of the seventy-seven merchants who subscribed to a merchants' list of currency exchange in the *Gazette*, and a member accepting the Charter of the Library Company of Philadelphia on May 3, 1742. "Ship Registers, Philadelphia," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, XXIV (1900), 212; *Pennsylvania Gazette* [Philadelphia], September 16, 1742; Leonard Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1960), II, 346-347.

innocence by Turner who also swore under oath that he was in no way responsible.³⁵

Richard Hockley used this occasion to appeal for the only real solution of the case, that one of the Penn Family come live in Pennsylvania, where, to the general satisfaction of the public, he might preside with justice and compassion. Hockley concluded, "Government though in a higher Sphere may be compared to a Family which cannot live in Unity unless some small Failures are overlooked and wink'd at, for love covers a multitude of Faults." But for twenty years longer, Pennsylvania had to wait until a Penn should personally govern again, and by then the situation had changed drastically.³⁶

With the question of the election riots all but dormant, the Assembly stirred up the matter once again by printing a full account, with transcripts of testimony, as an appendix to the year's Assembly minutes. Once again Plumsted, Turner and Allen drew up a remonstrance charging the Assembly had invaded their personal rights as Englishmen, since the accused had never had any opportunity to confront their accusers. Allen complained bitterly of the tactics of Assembly leaders, including Kinsey and Norris, "They distress and Render a Man uneasy by Slander, and the most base Calumnys. Their Printed Minutes is a fresh Instance of this, in which they have Published a Parcel of Ex-Parte Affirmations, Taken when these People were in a Heat, which Contain the grossest Falsehoods and a Suppression of the Truth and every Thing that did not Suit the Party."³⁷ Since the Assembly dropped further action on the riots, Allen judged that Assembly leaders might now be ashamed of their conduct. Many Assemblymen desired more peaceful relations with the governor and his party. Richard Hockley confirmed this, "The face of Affairs respecting Party is suprizingly altered and a good Harmony subsists in general." In summary he added, "I find there's Male contents on both sides."³⁸

³⁵ Isaac Norris II to Robert Charles, November 21, 1742, Norris Letters 1719-56, 13, and Remonstrance of Clement Plumsted, William Allen and Joseph Turner to the Honourable the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 289-291, HSP.

³⁶ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, November 1, 1742, *ibid.*, III, 241.

³⁷ William Allen to Thomas Penn, October 3, 1743, and Remonstrance of Plumsted, Allen and Turner, *ibid.*, 275, 289-291; *Votes*, III, 502-512, 564-589.

³⁸ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, May 5, 1743, Penn Papers: Off. Corr., III, 257, HSP.

Whatever the reservations of the Governor's party, John Kinsey, Isaac Norris II and the Quaker faction in the Assembly had been the chief beneficiaries of the riot and its aftermath. Governor Thomas had capitulated. The investigation of the riots exonerated Norris and the Pembertons while casting doubt on Plumsted, Allen, Turner and Robinson.³⁹ The conflict brought Norris great popular backing so that he ran highest or second highest in practically all Philadelphia County Assembly elections after 1742. The Quaker and German voters had been effectively welded into a party solidarity which encouraged much more widespread popular participation in October elections. A basis for the Quaker-German coalition had existed earlier in Norris assistance to the Germans and in common ideals among Friends and the pietist German Mennonites, Dunkers and Schwenkfelders. The election riot brought home the dangers of a relaxation of cooperative effort.

A side effect of the Election Riot of 1742 was the severe test it placed upon the Society of Friends' principle of non-violence. When the sailors flailed away with their sticks and cudgels, Friends received many of the blows, yet only a handful of their young men struck back. Israel Pemberton, Junior, did fight to protect his father, whose hand was "lamed"; Sam Norris and Isaac Griffiths earned the scorn of non-Quaker observers for their lapse into forceful retaliation, but they found it hard to resist when their aged kinsman Samuel Preston was assaulted. Indeed, the organized counterattack was undertaken by non-Quakers, including many church Germans, who were not bound by the code of peaceful resistance. No action was taken against the youthful Friends who lapsed into violence by any of the Meetings of Friends who had jurisdiction. Moreover, some political advantages accrued as a result of the "Bloody Election," which discredited proprietary leadership.

In a broad sense, the gradual phasing out of the Quakers from the leadership level of Pennsylvania government, which Isaac Norris II had referred to as a "revolution" in 1726, was now reversed, at least in the Assembly. There the popular will could be enforced in annual election of members of the House of Repre-

³⁹ *Votes*, III, 510-512.

sentatives of the Province of Pennsylvania. Thus Friends still had a strong voice in political structures established by William Penn. Small wonder that Isaac Norris II referred to the return to Quaker leadership in the Assembly as a "revolution" in 1743.⁴⁰ The Allen claims and charges concerning the 1742 election, which were discredited almost on the spot, have little more validity today. The net result of the 1742 fracas was not the stagnation of popular participation in government, as a recent writer has charged, but the implementation of a practical assumption that more citizens should enjoy voting rights, even if they did not speak English. By singling out persons they held responsible and insuring their election defeat, enfranchised citizens of Philadelphia City and County rejected outright violence as a means to a political end.

⁴⁰ Isaac Norris II to Jonathan Scarth, August 21, 1726, Norris Letters 1716-30, 475, and Isaac Norris II to Robert Charles, June 22, 1743, Norris Letters 1719-56, 19, HSP. Samuel Norris died in 1746 and Isaac Griffitts came under Society of Friends' discipline in 1748 for contributing to the outfitting of a privateer.