

Generals and “Gentlemen”: Pennsylvania Politics and the Decision for Valley Forge

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In the late fall of 1777, when it became clear that the British army, which had captured Philadelphia in September, would be able to occupy that city indefinitely, American revolutionary leaders began struggling with the difficult question of where the Continental army should spend the upcoming winter.¹ The answer was Valley Forge. The army's hardships there have become a metaphor for the character of the American Revolution. But questions remain about how and why the decision was made, and about its meaning for understanding the Revolution itself.

There are three broad views on this question. The one most deeply embedded in the popular imagination, but least linked to historiography, portrays a dispirited military force stumbling blindly into some relatively safe corner of the snowy American wilderness. Barely an army at all by European standards, badly mauled in the two battles they had fought that year, and crippled by logistical shortcomings, American troops came to Valley Forge. They passively persevered there, awaiting their providential deliverance by spring, and their reformation into a professional fighting force by the Prussian drillmaster Friedrich Steuben.² A second narrative hints that the army was steered to Valley Forge by naked political pressure applied by the state of Pennsylvania's embattled revolutionary government.³ It rests on a single document—a state protest to the Continental Congress against the army's presumed intention to quit the state—that did not even reach the army's headquarters until after it arrived at Valley Forge on December 19, 1777.⁴

The argument most readily accepted by historians admits both the army's material and organizational problems in late 1777 and the political pressures it faced to protect the Revolution in Pennsylvania as reasons for the decision to winter at Valley Forge. In the most recent, and by far the most compelling statement of this view, Benjamin Newcomb credits analytical processes at the highest level of the army's command for locating the encampment. Newcomb argues that George

Washington and his generals used "a rational process of elimination" among available alternatives to develop "a plan for cantonment that probably was the best given the circumstances." His reconstruction emphasizes the strategic needs of the army and discounts the importance of political forces in shaping the Valley Forge decision.⁵

While the role of collective military analysis in forming Revolutionary strategy has been underappreciated by historians, this article concludes that the decision-making process for Valley Forge was indeed mainly "political." The army was deflected from the course it would probably have otherwise taken by the concerted intervention of Pennsylvania government officials. If we are to understand the war as a revolutionary "process" it is necessary to keep the political dimensions of the "Valley Forge winter," and especially of its origins, in the foreground.⁶

The question of where the army should go next was not new in late November, 1777, when Washington posed it to his generals. The matter was pressing and the army was seriously divided. Connecticut brigadier Ebenezer Huntington wrote two weeks earlier that he and his colleagues had been "agitating the Disposition of our Troops for the Winter and find ourselves, the more we canvass the matter, the more at a loss."⁷ Huntington and his peers soon discovered that the decision was not theirs alone to make. The matter of "disposition" really comprised three inter-related questions, each of which had important political dimensions. Where would the army spend the winter? What activities would it undertake there? And how, since it was immobilized at Whitemarsh, near Philadelphia, because its supply systems had recently collapsed, could it obtain the material means to remain intact?

The stance of interested parties on these matters differed. Pennsylvania's government expected the army to protect the region near the British headquarters in Philadelphia from a position as close to the city as could safely be maintained.⁸ The state had the most precariously-situated local government in America, and its survival depended on vigorous resistance to British arms. It had a large population of avowed loyalists, many of whom had flocked to the protection of the British army, and an even larger group of principled pacifists.⁹ Since the 1680s, Pennsylvanians had expected their government, especially its legislative branch, to insulate them from war. The Assembly had perfected ways of doing just that, and Quakers held power long after they became a demographic minority in the colony largely on the basis of their ability to hold imperial wars and their consequences at bay.¹⁰

Quakers were gone from power by 1777 and keeping war away was impossible, but the popular expectation that its impact be mitigated was a burden their Revolutionary successors inherited. The state's government was divided between a thin majority of "radicals," who had overthrown the proprietary government in 1776 and written the most democratic state constitution in America, and a large minority of "moderates" who cooperated in resistance to British arms while hoping to replace that constitution with a more conservative one.¹¹ The cost of government dereliction became clear late in 1776 when British troops drove across New Jersey toward the Delaware River. The Continental Congress adjourned to Baltimore at the mere *approach* of war, while thousands of citizens fled Philadelphia in terror. In 1777 both the state and Continental governments prudently remained within Pennsylvania but Whig legitimacy there continued to be precarious. It depended largely on the government's ability to protect those patriot civilians who had stayed in southeastern Pennsylvania. This in turn required the Continental Army's cooperation.¹²

Congress's position on the army's disposition was different from, but complementary to, that of the state. Its members huddled in York, Pennsylvania, where they had fled from Philadelphia in September. During the fall they remained overtly oblivious to the army's gathering logistical crisis, and their own contribution to it through their bungled reorganization in June 1777 of the Continental Commissary Department.¹³ Congress was divided between loosely-denominated "Eastern" (New England), "Middle," and "Southern" blocs, who disagreed chronically over issues of Revolutionary strategy, diplomacy, and finance.¹⁴ During the winter these Congressional divisions would shape and complicate the army's material predicament. More immediately important, however, were the delegates' shared concerns and insecurities as the political authors of the Revolution itself. In November 1777 they anxiously waited for news from their commissioners in Paris about negotiations for a Franco-American military alliance against Britain. Hoping to capitalize on the credibility gained by Horatio Gates's victory at Saratoga in mid-October, they overcame internal disagreements to pass in draft form "Articles of Confederation" for submission to the states. They were also preparing tax and monetary legislation to attack the price inflation that was undermining the war effort.¹⁵

The delegates feared damage to the Revolution from any setbacks to the main army under Washington in Pennsylvania *or* from the undermining of Pennsylvania's

beleaguered government. Their focus on diplomatic, fiscal, and constitutional issues hampered their close involvement in strategic questions, but they had not previously hesitated to meddle in military affairs in ways reflecting the enmity between regional factional blocs.¹⁶ During the autumn crisis, however, Congressional anxieties cut *across*, rather than along, lines of these internal politics. Whatever their policy differences, most members expected the army to remain on the offensive. William Ellery of Rhode Island, a moderate member of the "Eastern" bloc, hoped that Washington's troops would "keep the Field this Winter," and thought that they might "intirely destroy Mr. Howe's Army."¹⁷ Cornelius Harnett of North Carolina, a Southern moderate, was "not without hopes of dislodging Genl. Howe from Philadelphia this winter. . . . One bold push may yet retrieve all."¹⁸ William Duer, a conservative New Yorker who supported the southerners, felt that "we shall be able during the Winter to strike a bold Stroke ag[ains]t Mr. Howe."¹⁹ Congress's president, Henry Laurens, a South Carolina radical who voted with New England but maintained close ties to Washington, hoped that "we shall infallibly be in possession of New York or Philadelphia or both before the end of January."²⁰ On November 28 a committee was sent from York to consult with Washington on "the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter's campaign . . . an object which Congress have much at heart."²¹

Private remarks of members of Congress suggest that one of their objectives in appointing the committee was to isolate the commander-in-chief from his tactically cautious officer corps.²² Ebenezer Huntington's comments show, however, that the officers' stance on the question of winter quarters was hardly unanimous. Washington informally floated the question among his aides and general officers during the latter stages of the campaign. On November 30 he summoned the generals to a Council of War where the options were discussed at length but no decisions were made. Instead, Washington asked the officers to put their opinions in written memoranda. A day later he reported the results to Joseph Reed, his former aide and a newly-elected Pennsylvania delegate to Congress. Stationing the army "from Reading to Lancaster inclusively, is the general sentiment," he wrote, "whilst Wilmington and its vicinity has powerful advocates."²³

Washington's summary concealed more complexity than it disclosed. Eighteen generals answered his poll. Nine advocated retiring to various lines, anchored by the interior towns, that Washington grouped under the rubric of "Reading to

Lancaster." Seven respondents promoted encampments at Wilmington, Delaware, twenty-seven miles below Philadelphia on the Delaware River. Two suggested open encampments in huts nearer Philadelphia. Facing numerous possibilities, Washington described himself as "exceedingly embarrassed, not only by the advice given me, but also in my own judgement," and he requested Reed's advice on the matter.²⁴

Elements of the debates of November 30, which have not survived in minutes, echoed through the subsequent memoranda. They make clear, for example, that the generals identified two contradictory strategic objectives for the army's winter disposition.²⁵ One was "covering" the country near occupied Philadelphia, the other "recruiting" (or resting, refreshing, and disciplining) the army. The memoranda also show that the three site options on which the generals divided—Lancaster, Wilmington, and "hutting" in the open field—had all emerged explicitly at the Council.²⁶ Indeed, the written opinions comprised efforts by the generals to harmonize or rank the two strategic objectives and to apply the results to the three alternatives.

Most officers conceded in principle the merits of *both* "covering" the country—which they defined variously—and "recruiting." But advocates of the Lancaster-Reading line tended either to view "covering" in narrowly military terms of denying the British the material resources of the Philadelphia region, or—if they considered the political implications of protecting or abandoning civilians—to subordinate them to the army's needs for shelter. Henry Knox, the commander of Continental artillery, argued that the "ease and safety" of the soldiers were "greater objects" than preventing Howe from drawing supplies from the Philadelphia area. Peter Muhlenberg considered "the preservation of the Army" to be of "much greater utility" than "any small advantages" gained by confining the enemy near the city. George Weedon felt that "covering this, or any other spot, for the space of three or four months, is not a motive sufficient to hazard" the army, which he called "the Herculean hinge on which American Independence turns."²⁷

These officers expected a new campaign in 1778, saw the preparation of the army already in place as the paramount need of the winter, and feared that a disposition nearer to Philadelphia than Reading might inexorably precipitate a "winter's campaign."²⁸ A regional dimension in the deliberations is suggested by the geographic origins of these men. The nine advocates of interior cantonment included

four Virginians, three New Englanders, one European volunteer, and only one resident of the Middle States, where the war's most destructive fighting had recently occurred.²⁹

The placement of the army at Wilmington attracted generals with different values, modes of analysis, and regional origins. Its advocates were more ambivalent about weighing the interests of their troops against those of Pennsylvania's inhabitants.³⁰ They acknowledged that ideally the army would serve the needs of both constituencies. Indeed, they saw in Wilmington a reasonable possibility of doing just that. Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island explained that "we must have regard not only to the army but [to] the country." While denying any intention of "taking [military] measures from popular opinions," he emphasized the need to "preserve the confidence of the country."³¹ The Marquis de Lafayette, a new French volunteer, used a similarly exhaustive analysis of competing variables to elevate the needs of "our present civil situation" for a "shining and perhaps bold" stance over the "prudent" military assets of the Reading line.³²

The most unambivalently political preferences for Wilmington were expressed by two Pennsylvania officers and by one foreigner. John Armstrong, the head of the much-maligned Pennsylvania militia, argued that the army's retirement to Lancaster-Reading would depress the "hearts of good men" everywhere, "sacrifice" Pennsylvania "in particular [and] without real necessity," and result in "an end to Government & the future aid of the militia." He recommended placing most of the army at Wilmington, with small detachments forming a "chain" northwest into Chester County.³³ Pennsylvania brigadier Anthony Wayne concurred in stronger terms. The withdrawal of the army would not only disappoint the just expectation of Pennsylvanians for protection, he claimed, but would deter other states from aiding in future campaigns, "least they should first irritate, & afterwards be left to the mercy of a more than savage foe."³⁴ Frenchman Louis Du Portaille captured the gist of "covering the country" for officers who defined that objective politically by portraying the consequences if the enemy did the covering instead: "recruiting in the country," he mournfully recited, "extending himself in it, adding to the number of his partisans, in a word *gaining* the country."³⁵

Two generals urged Washington to keep the army even more closely engaged with the enemy than they would be at Wilmington. Lord Stirling of New Jersey weighed the comforts that the troops "richly deserved" against the precarious secu-

rity they would enjoy at Wilmington and the hardships they would impose on the civilian war refugees swelling the inland towns. He decided that this equation required placing the army in huts in Tredyffrin Township in "the Great Valley," west of the Schuylkill River.³⁶ James Irvine, a Pennsylvania militia brigadier, emphasized the negative effect on the future aid of his state of "disgust[ing]" the army's "friends" by leaving them at the mercy of the British. He urged that the army "take a strong position on the other side of the Schuylkill," in huts between twenty and thirty miles west of Philadelphia.³⁷ The last two recommendations comprised a small minority opinion among the generals at the beginning of December, but very nearly predicted the exact location to which the army moved less than three weeks later. The great problematic for any analysis of the decision-making process, and one that Newcomb's otherwise insightful account cannot meet, is to show how and why this alteration occurred.

Washington's summary for Reed of the opinions before him did little justice to their complexity and contradiction, or to their implications for the impending deliberations on the army's disposition. It may have revealed his own inclination even as he portrayed himself as "about fixing" on the decision. By calling the marginal preference for Reading-Lancaster "the general sentiment," lumping seven votes for Wilmington under the ambiguous phrase "powerful advocates," and ignoring calls for a hutted encampment, Washington perhaps identified with the desire of some of his most experienced commanders to elevate strategic considerations and the immediate needs of the troops over the political interests of the host government and its citizens.³⁸ On the same day he advised Horatio Gates that the "most elibigle" post would "afford the best cover to the Troops, and will at the same time cut off the Enemy from Resources of provisions." Such a position might have been found anywhere, but Washington's rhetoric more closely echoed the categories used by the Reading-Lancaster advocates, in its emphasis on military needs and its narrow definition of "covering" the country, than the civil and political terms employed by most of the other generals.³⁹

Whatever course Washington contemplated, external developments converging on the deliberative process soon reduced his opinion, and those of his generals, to a consultative status. By December 2 he learned of Congress's decision to send the conferring committee to camp.⁴⁰ He asked his generals for new memoranda on "the advisability of a Winters Campaign, and practicability of an attempt on Phila-

delphia," due by December 4.⁴¹ Those documents gave him useful ammunition with which to resist Congress's apparent effort to influence strategic decision-making. Of twenty-one replies received, seventeen generals spoke unequivocally against attacking Philadelphia. On the broader question of a winter campaign, thirteen generals opposed the idea outright, five supported it, one equivocated, and two abstained.⁴²

Washington was probably not surprised by these results, but the poll showed other patterns that complicated his position. The five supporters of a winter campaign were all Pennsylvanians. Brigadier General Anthony Wayne and militia commander John Armstrong, who wanted to send the army to Wilmington, joined militia general James Irvine, who voted for hutting west of Philadelphia, in stating that a winter campaign was desirable. Militia brigadiers John Cadwallader and James Potter, who had not voted on December 1, both supported the winter campaign.⁴³ The Pennsylvanians reiterated their essentially political arguments about the need for the army to protect patriots, sustain the spirits of timid or wavering citizens, and uphold the army's reputation as the guarantor of revolutionary authority. On one point, they perversely agreed with advocates of withdrawing the army to shelter in interior Pennsylvania towns. Several of the latter predicted that remaining near the city would draw the army into a winter campaign. Two Pennsylvanians carried that prediction to its logical conclusion by effectively defining taking a post near the city as being the winter campaign that they desired.⁴⁴

From Washington's perspective, this division limited his ability to use the military expertise of his subordinates as a bulwark against strategic interference by a civilian Congress. The congressional delegates came to camp to advocate that the army keep the field, something that their colleagues had "much at heart." The embattled civil authorities of Pennsylvania agreed. Robert Morris, a member of the committee, was a representative from Pennsylvania, and on the way to Whitemarsh he offered Thomas Wharton, President of Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council, to "execute any of your commands."⁴⁵ The state also had other representatives on their way to the army. On November 28 the Council of Safety, a state body combining legislative and executive functions, dispatched Assemblyman John Bayard, and James Young, to Whitemarsh to investigate reports that the Pennsylvanians were more poorly clothed than other troops.⁴⁶ And Congress sent two members to Lancaster to confer with the state on ways to improve the movement of

provisions to camp.⁴⁷ With logistical and strategic issues closely linked by recent events, the institutional circuits seemed wired for complex negotiations over the military direction of the Revolution.

On reaching camp on December 3 the representatives of the civilian bodies quickly began to promote their agendas. John Laurens, the son of Congress's President Henry Laurens and one of Washington's closest aides, posed for his father the stark terms in which the "disposition" debate had already been framed. "The question is," he noted "whether we are to go into remote Winter Quarters and form a Chain of Cantonments in the interior part of the Country leaving a vast extent of Territory exposed to the devastation of an enraged unsparing Enemy [and] leaving the well affected to fall Sacrifice, and deplore our abandonment of them and the Country, or whether we shall take a position more honorable, more military, more Republican, more consonant to the popular Wish in a proper situation for covering the Country."⁴⁸

The army's visitors had their own answers to this question. Elbridge Gerry, a Congressman from Massachusetts and a strong advocate of a winter campaign, found the army "stronger than it has been this campaign."⁴⁹ At their first meeting Washington showed the committee the generals' opinions on winter quarters. Gerry observed that they had not "come to camp for the purpose of promoting this plan [for withdrawing to interior towns]."⁵⁰ He wrote that his committee had "large powers," and pointedly hinted that if a winter campaign was decided on its members might even decide to "remain with the army" while it was executed.⁵¹

The state committeemen also met with Washington on December 3. After initiating discussions about clothing, Bayard and Young plunged into the larger issue of the army's winter disposition.⁵² They warned several generals of "the horrid Consequences that must follow" a retreat to the Lancaster-Reading line, "nothing less. . . [than] the loss of the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Eastern Shore of Maryland, & [a] great part of this State."⁵³ They found "our field officers [Pennsylvanians?] in general are violently opposed to it & declare should such a measure be adopted they would immediately resign." They also lobbied with their colleagues on the congressional committee about the issue.⁵⁴

On December 4 the congressional committee met again with Washington and received the second set of memoranda on a winter campaign and an attack on Philadelphia. Their deliberations on how to deal with the generals' objections to a

winter campaign were disrupted that night by the sudden approach of the enemy.⁵⁵ At midnight on December 4 most of the British army left the city in two columns, led by Generals William Howe and Charles Cornwallis, and marched through Chestnut Hill toward the American camp. Washington had expected an attack from Philadelphia all week, and the army had been rested, armed, and equipped for such an event.⁵⁶

The deliberations were broken off, and the committees were treated to a first-hand demonstration of the army's strengths and liabilities—indeed, of its ability to undertake the winter campaign that the congressmen had come to Whitemarsh to promote. Howe found the Americans securely lodged in a heavily fortified camp that could be carried, if at all, only at the cost of unacceptably heavy casualties. Washington was unwilling to leave that ground, even for the sake of the battle that his army had been spoiling for, because his casualties in the ravine in front of the camp would have been as heavy, and as impossible to justify, as Howe's would have been on the American redoubts. Howe settled for a methodical probing of the American position, proceeding laboriously from the right wing to the left, a maneuver that consumed more than two days. On completing what amounted to a hotly-contested inspection tour, Howe retired to Philadelphia on December 8, satisfied that he would be able to report to London that he had at least done his best to provoke a decisive battle.⁵⁷

Inconclusive though they were in purely military terms, the Whitemarsh skirmishes had one significant political result. They helped to tip the balance away from the stalemate that had developed over the question of the army's winter disposition toward a compromise. Advocates of aggressive offensive measures on the committee and in Congress saw in the episode reinforcement for their views. Elbridge Gerry regretted that the British had "puzzle[d] our Officers by their Manoeuvres," which he thought could have been prevented had the Americans initiated the attack. "Untill such an enterprizing Spirit prevails," he concluded, "[I] think that the Enemy will manoeuvre to Advantage."⁵⁸

Some of Gerry's allies in Congress reached similar conclusions, but his colleagues on the committee probably felt differently.⁵⁹ Several observers insisted that a plan for an American attack on the taunting Redcoats was "on the Carpet" on December 8, but that there was strong opposition from many officers. The image of generals unable or unwilling to pull the trigger on a response that most of them

undoubtedly wanted to make probably convinced the committee that a winter campaign was all but impossible.⁶⁰ But the British army's wanton destruction of civilian property northwest of Philadelphia and in front of the American camp perhaps persuaded many generals that retiring to the Lancaster-Reading line would indeed subject Whiggish and neutral civilians in the region to unacceptable depredations.⁶¹ This convergence set the stage for renewed deliberations, which began on December 9 and moved rapidly toward a decision. There is no indication that Washington summoned a Council of War among his generals, or otherwise continued the consultative processes that had figured prominently in his decision-making. The final discussions, rather, were limited to the general, his aides, members of the congressional committee, Joseph Reed, John Bayard of the Pennsylvania clothing committee, and individuals summoned on an *ad hoc* basis for limited advisory roles.⁶²

It is thus significant that Pennsylvania's militia commander John Armstrong was called to headquarters on December 9.⁶³ Circumstantial evidence suggests that important compromises and trade-offs emerged from the discussions that day which shaped the army's relationships with both the political bodies and with the civilians of the Delaware Valley during the rest of the winter. On December 10 the congressional committee wrote to Washington to summarize its findings. Its members blamed the "general discontent in the Army and especially among the Officers" for the resistance to the winter campaign they had come to promote.⁶⁴ They acknowledged that under the given circumstances an attack on Philadelphia was "ineligible." And they advised that until the army could be reinforced "such a Post should be taken by the Army as will be most likely to aggrieve the Enemy, afford supplies of provision . . . and [be] best calculated for covering the Country from the Ravages of the Enemy . . . as well as afford[ing] comfortable Quarters for the Officers and Soldiers."⁶⁵

This formula relinquished aggressive designs for a winter campaign, but otherwise did little more than restate the broad menu of desirable goals, on the relationship and priority of which the generals had recently divided into three broad camps. But evidence suggests that the discussions on December 9 greatly narrowed the boundaries of the decision. Joseph Reed, who was watching over Pennsylvania's interests at camp, left for his home at Norriton that evening. The next day he informed the Supreme Executive Council that the generals' plan to withdraw the

army to interior lines for the winter had effectively been defeated. Washington, he wrote, "will not come into it, but take a post as near the enemy, and cover as much of the country as the nakedness and wretched situation of some parts of the army will admit." Reed conceded that the army could not "keep the field entirely," but assured Wharton that the plan had "been adopted principally upon the opinions of the Gentlemen of this state" and that it would "give satisfaction to you and the Gentlemen around you." "If it is not doing what we would," he observed reassuringly, "it is doing what we can."⁶⁶

Reed later revealed that the new plan had been crafted by himself, Nathanael Greene, and John Cadwallader, as "the most eligible [way] to quiet the minds of the people and cover the country."⁶⁷ This statement is supported by a plan that Greene and the major generals presented to Washington on December 10. This complex design specified the order in which the brigades would move across the Schuylkill River.⁶⁸ It also revealed, obliquely, elements of the decision reached the previous day. For example, it disclosed that a brigade of continental troops would be sent to New Jersey, probably for the winter, to answer that state's complaints about its defenseless condition. That brigade would remain temporarily east of the Schuylkill, however, "to serve as a covering party" for the withdrawing army.⁶⁹

The "orders" also suggested that an understanding had been reached to allow the Continental Army to focus its attention on the area west of the Schuylkill, while the "whole of the Pennsylvania militia . . . act[ed] collectively" on the east side.⁷⁰ That arrangement would increase the security and reduce wear on Continental troops by narrowing their sphere of responsibility, and undercut objections to the revised plan by advocates of interior cantonments. One "Troop" of Continental cavalry would go to New Jersey with the infantry brigade, while "the remainder of a Regiment" of horsemen stayed east of the river "to act with the Pennsylvania Militia."⁷¹

While a broad framework was thus established for early winter military operations, many details were left incomplete.⁷² The army had barely left Whitemarsh when the conditional nature of these arrangements became apparent. The vanguard crossed the Schuylkill at Matson's Ford early on December 11, but met a large British foraging party and retreated under heavy fire. Washington moved the army four miles north along the east bank of the river before crossing again on December 12 at Swede's Ford. The troops halted in a wet, narrow defile known as

“the Gulph,” while final decisions were made about their winter destination.⁷³

On the 13th, Reed suddenly warned Wharton that the plan he had described three days earlier—which he repeated had been “approved by the Gentlemen of this state, and I hoped would be acceptable to you and the other Gentlemen in authority”—had “upon other advice been totally changed.”⁷⁴ He insisted that it had been agreed that “a Brigade of Continental Troops [was to have been] left with the Militia on this [east] side Schuylkill.” Now, he complained, the “remains” of the Pennsylvania militia on the west bank would cross to the east side, where the whole body, under General Armstrong, would amount to “about 1000 militia many without arms and without a single Troop of Horse.”⁷⁵ Reed’s discontent may have reflected his misunderstanding of the intended use of the Continental brigade that the Greene plan assigned to New Jersey after a brief stay east of the Schuylkill. But it probably also resulted from Washington’s view of the ultimate contingency of the agreement itself, and his decision to alter it after meeting Cornwallis’s detachment on December 11.⁷⁶

Despite quibbles about the details, most military officers understood after December 9 that a new plan had been adopted for the army. Elias Boudinot, the continental commissary-general of prisoners, told Wharton that “I am rather led to believe that we shall not see winter Quarters this year.”⁷⁷ Jedediah Huntington wrote that the army would cross the Schuylkill that night to its new winter location, “but whether in the woods or in some town or towns I cannot tell you.” Reflecting the growing frustration of many generals excluded from a seemingly endless decision-making process occurring virtually before their eyes, he complained that “I don’t like our Councils very well.”⁷⁸

Pennsylvania’s militia generals, James Potter and John Armstrong, expressed the same perception of the result with more satisfaction when both described the coming months—whatever the exact placement of this brigade or that cavalry troop—as “a Winter Campaign.”⁷⁹ Potter wrote before and Armstrong after the changes that incensed Reed, but both knew that Pennsylvania’s parochial—if undeniably meritorious and strongly-expressed—political interests had prevailed over the contrary strategic instincts of many soldiers. Armstrong even acknowledged the partial legitimacy of Washington’s reluctance to divide his army by the Schuylkill River. He and Potter had no other requests than to be allowed to yield their places to younger men better able to withstand the rigors of a winter in the field.⁸⁰

For Pennsylvania's civil authorities, however, the possible demise of the agreement was a threat that had to be resisted. As late as December 13 Thomas Wharton was unsure that the army would remain near Philadelphia.⁸¹ The receipt of Reed's letter, and the return to Lancaster of John Bayard, turned doubt into alarm. On December 15 Bayard visited the Council to request a joint conference with the Assembly "on the situation of the State, with respect to the Continental Army going into Winter Quarters."⁸² The two state bodies met that day and "unanimously agreed to remonstrate to Congress against the Army going into Cantonments."⁸³ Their "Remonstrance" showed their belief that the army's intended destination in crossing the Schuylkill River was Wilmington. They complained that this would leave the "great part of this state . . . in the Power of the Enemy, subject to their Ravages."⁸⁴ Underlying these fears was an explicit uneasiness about, even as outright distrust of, the tenuous state of political ties between Pennsylvania's citizens and their internally-divided government. "Nothing but the neighborhood of the Army keeps [Pennsylvania's many disaffected citizens] subject to government," the authorities acknowledged, and even good Whigs were in danger of becoming "discouraged & giv[ing] up all as lost."⁸⁵

As revealing as it was of the precarious legitimacy of civil authority in Pennsylvania, the state's alarm was also the product of procedural inertia and difficult communications. Even as the politicians remonstrated, Washington's aide-de-camp John Laurens was assuring his father that a field encampment, rather than "cantonments" in interior towns, had been chosen. The "precise Position" would be fixed that day, but Laurens insisted that it would cover "the Country we have just left."⁸⁶ John Armstrong wrote that Washington "with the whole of the Army has now taken his Winter Position in [Chester County] so that the forbidding idea of Winter Quarters is now, I hope, fully laid aside."⁸⁷

The precise moment when Valley Forge was selected as the army's campsite, and the *exact* reasons why it was chosen, remain unclear, but December 16 stands out as the most probable day. Washington's aide-de-camp, John Fitzgerald, that day notified Major John Clark that "tomorrow we shall march 4 or 5 miles higher up [from the Gulph] & *build* for Winter Quarters." An angry Mordecai Gist told a friend in Maryland that Congress had "recommended a winter's campaign," and had "proposed hutting the army about seven miles in the rear of this place on some advantageous ground and we are now preparing to march to build a city for that

purpose." But Joseph Ward, of Massachusetts, the Muster-Master General, the next day informed Samuel Adams that the army's "next route" was still "an uncertainty, even with those who ought to know. Whether we shall go into Winter Quarters in proper cantonments, or hut in the woods or hills, has long been under consideration and too long undetermined." These comments all suggest frustration on the part of military men with political intrusion into the "disposition" issue.⁸⁸

Washington's explanation to army members on December 17 of the decisions he had made for the winter drew rhetorical elements from Pennsylvania's three-week long campaign to influence those decisions. He portrayed the state's interior towns as "crowded with virtuous citizens," who had fled the Philadelphia area and to whose burdens the army must not add. He pointed to the army's "firm friends" remaining in the area, who would be "exposed to . . . the most insulting and wanton depredation" if the army left the field. He even borrowed from proponents on his own staff of a field encampment the rationalization that the troops would be safer, if not more comfortable, concentrated in huts than dispersed in villages. And he appealed to the soldiers' patience, professionalism, and republican virtue, promising to "share in the hardship and partake of every inconvenience."⁸⁹

The Pennsylvania remonstrance was not recalled, however, and its slow progress through the revolutionary bureaucracy prevented any smooth transition between the campaign and the encampment. The remonstrance reached Congress on December 17, the same day that Washington exhorted his troops. The day before Congress had received a report from its committee at camp, which echoed the members' preliminary account of their findings to Washington and pronounced a winter campaign "ineligible." Congress considered the two documents together on December 18. The next day it forced the committee members to divulge the generals' memoranda on quarters and a winter campaign. That afternoon, as the Continental troops reached Valley Forge, the delegates threw the issue back into Washington's lap by voting to send him a copy of the Pennsylvania remonstrance. Their language suggests that they shared the Pennsylvania authorities' anxiety that the army would leave the state. They asked for information about his intended "line of cantonment," and especially how Washington intended to protect the area east of the Schuylkill and New Jersey.⁹⁰

But beyond this residual disgruntlement, which reflected the continued belief of some members that a more aggressive military stance was needed, Congress

deferred to Washington's judgment. It commended New Jersey's plight to his attention, but then the members turned back to routine legislative business.⁹¹ Before the day was over Congress heard rumors that "the army are about putting in the Gulph Valley." Jonathan B. Smith, a member from Pennsylvania, gave the Supreme Executive Council this news, adding in a tone suspended between satisfaction and resignation that "this is the wish of Congress as far as I can judge."⁹²

The process by which the army's winter "disposition" was settled helped to shape the experience of both civilians and soldiers in the Delaware Valley during the winter of 1777-1778. It is important, however, to recognize what did *not* happen in revolutionary political councils as that process unfolded. The Continental Congress did *not* divide over the issue along the sectional or ideological "party" lines that H. James Henderson has discerned for that body's overall political behavior.⁹³ Unlike the congressional split over command and strategy issues in the Hudson Valley, the Pennsylvania campaign did not provoke a clash between "Eastern" radicals demanding relentless offensive steps supported by an outpouring of "virtuous" militia, and Southern conservatives willing to sacrifice the comforts of the civilians of a supine state to give the regular army a chance to regroup and gird for ensuing campaigns.⁹⁴ Instead, the burden of the evidence shows Congress as a whole moving slowly from a consensus in favor of a winter campaign in late November to the grudging acceptance of a limited field encampment that Smith reported to his allies in Lancaster three weeks later.

Similarly, political forces within Pennsylvania did *not* split over the "disposition" issues in ways consistent with what historians have shown about the balance of power in that state. If they had, beleaguered supporters of the "radical" state constitution of 1776, clinging to power in both the Assembly and the Supreme Executive Council, should have led the fight for an aggressive military stance to shield the state's Whig citizens and to provide the militia with a center around which to rally. "Conservative" or "moderate" opponents of the constitution should have been indifferent to the matter, or even viewed the crisis as an instrument for the collapse of the "Constitutional" regime.⁹⁵

Instead, partisans of all stripes within the fragile Whig coalition manning the government in late 1777 cooperated to assure that the state receive maximum support from the army. The moderately "radical" Thomas Wharton, Jr. headed the Council, balancing the more open partisanship there of vice-president George Bryan.

In the state's congressional delegation, the active radicalism of Daniel Roberdeau offset the conservatism of Robert Morris.⁹⁶ It was the state's agents at camp, however, who best illustrate the complex interplay of politics and strategy in this decision. Joseph Reed, John Bayard, and John Cadwallader had all been leaders of resistance to British policy since 1774, and had each risen to power through Philadelphia's politicized militia units. Despite these ties, however, they were different actors, spanning Pennsylvania's political spectrum from dead center to near right.

Two were pragmatic supporters of the state constitution, but neither was in any real sense of the term a "radical." Reed was an attorney and an instinctive moderate who had begun to diverge from the leftward drift of Pennsylvania politics in the spring of 1776, because of his belief that independence was consistent with the preservation of Pennsylvania's existing charter and Assembly.⁹⁷ He sidestepped these differences by accepting an appointment as adjutant-general of the Continental Army in June of 1776, and he remained in the field as a volunteer during most of 1777.⁹⁸ But his cautious temperament made him refuse an appointment as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, from a reluctance to take an oath not to work for the revision of the state's constitution.⁹⁹ Even election to Congress in September of 1777 did not lure Reed back into public office until the autumn campaign had ended. He thus reached camp with only lukewarm ties to the "radical" state government whose interests he undertook to represent.¹⁰⁰

John Bayard was also tenuously attached to the standing political order in Pennsylvania. More willing than Reed to abandon the Assembly and charter in May and June of 1776, Bayard began drifting away from the radicals a few months later.¹⁰¹ In October he chaired a public meeting in Philadelphia that adopted resolutions criticizing the constitution written in July by a convention of previously disenfranchised Pennsylvanians. In November he was elected to the Assembly formed under that document, but on a ticket pledged to resist the organization of the government and to demand the calling of a new convention.¹⁰²

No such ambiguities colored John Cadwallader's politics. Unlike Reed and Bayard, who were relative newcomers to Pennsylvania, Cadwallader was the son of a longtime activist in the proprietary political establishment.¹⁰³ He adhered to the resistance movement longer than did his celebrated cousin, John Dickinson, but he shared Dickinson's deep conservatism.¹⁰⁴ At a meeting chaired by Bayard in

May of 1776 to organize opposition to the Assembly, Cadwallader angered the crowd by attempting to moderate resolutions passed by acclamation.¹⁰⁵ He came to Whitemarsh with such contempt for the regime whose safety he worked to protect that he told Reed its government could not be changed "without another Revolution."¹⁰⁶

We might ask why, then, Cadwallader helped to broker a compromise on the winter placement of the Continental Army, the very failure of which might have precipitated such another "revolution" against the "radical" government that he abhorred? Or why even Reed or Bayard, with their more tempered ambivalence about the implications of government-as-constituted in Pennsylvania, joined in that effort? The answer lies partly in the ambiguities of the situation, and partly in historians' habit of blending fluid processes into static sketches. All three men, and others like them, were groping along complex situational paths in late 1777. While past or impending milestones on those paths are useful guides to understanding their reactions to events, they are no more than that. The intensity of their commitment to such views as Cadwallader's expression about the need for "another Revolution" in Pennsylvania can be wondered about, but they should not be blithely presumed.

It is perhaps even appropriate to question standing accounts of the broader political contours of Pennsylvania at this time. Rather than a "radical" government, however beleaguered, it may be more accurate to describe the state regime as a loosely-jointed, thinly-staffed, and grudgingly-embraced coalition body, saddled with a charter that some of its members considered merely adequate, but that others deemed far too radical. Conservatives like Cadwallader were outraged when the government reneged in September 1777 on its June agreement to explore seriously revising the controversial constitution, while moderates such as Reed and Bayard were perhaps also disturbed by that development. It was impossible for anyone, however, to see how the struggle over the state government would evolve in the near future, or how it would intersect with the equally opaque course of the war. Members of the diverse constellation of state officials in camp were only hedging their several bets by supporting a position that would constrain the ability of the British army to terrorize the state while protecting citizens of various Whig loyalties.

Finally, the decision that brought the army to Valley Forge, however “political” its premises may have been, was *not* imposed on the army by either the state or Continental political bodies.¹⁰⁷ The intervention of state agents almost certainly deflected the decision from the course it would have taken if the generals’ written memoranda had been the only consideration involved. But the final decision was undoubtedly Washington’s to make. Cornelius Harnett, who supported the congressional scheme for a winter campaign, advised a constituent that Congress knew “no more of the Intentions of the Army than you do, until some event or Other takes place, Congress have very wisely determined to put it in Genl. Washington’s power to keep his Own secrets.”¹⁰⁸

This stand was partly disingenuous, as Harnett acknowledged in the next sentence when he mentioned the “Committee of Congress now at Head Quarters.”¹⁰⁹ But it seems likely that even the committee members understood their arrangements with Washington to be more of a general framework than a fixed settlement. Their colleagues’ acquiescent response to the Pennsylvania “Remonstrance” suggests that they saw matters the same way. Joseph Reed’s alarm, Thomas Wharton’s petulance, and the Pennsylvania Remonstrance itself show that the state’s agents had a more rigid interpretation of the decisions reached at camp. But the Remonstrance was ultimately, by its timing alone, more of an ironic or even a seriocomic element in the deliberative process—an argument counter productively continued after the point was won—than the decisive factor by which the state coerced the army’s winter disposition.

While the civilians of the Delaware Valley were more aware of the cruel destruction wrought northwest of Philadelphia during the clash of the armies at Whitemarsh than of the concurrent deliberations between Washington and the politicians, the latter—and the results they produced—had more enduring effects. Those effects were neither simple nor uniformly distributed. The continued presence of an American army in the region meant a different kind of winter than its retirement to interior “cantonments” or to Wilmington would have produced. For some individuals that difference involved more danger, more damage, or more pressure on their ability to remain aloof from the conflict. For others it included more protection and even more power to exploit the perverse “opportunities” of war. For most, perhaps, it offered more of *both* things, in different proportions and juxtaposition than would a Continental retreat. Area farmers protected by the army

from British food plundering raids, to cite just one example, might later run afoul of Continental patrols when they tried to sell their surplus produce in Philadelphia!

For members of the military community an encampment rather than “cantonments” meant more hardships, not more opportunities. But Washington, having reluctantly embraced the need for the army to secure the legitimacy of Pennsylvania’s government by serving as a symbol, if not a surrogate, for civil authority, worked hard to delineate that role as narrowly as possible.¹¹⁰ Before the winter even began he took a dividend from the inaptly-timed and ineptly-phrased Pennsylvania Remonstrance, by using it to extract cooperation from Congress for military and logistical reforms that he considered essential to the army’s continued security.¹¹¹ Washington rebutted the “Remonstrance” by spitting at Congress a term for Pennsylvania’s political leaders that he had undoubtedly been hearing too much of recently: the “Gentlemen” of the state. In this epithet we can hear the echoes, perhaps in the voices of Reed, Bayard, and Cadwallader, of strident discussions at Washington’s headquarters during the week of December 4-9.¹¹²

Those discussions were much more political than strategic. Their effect, which was transparent through the ranks, helps to explain the troops’ contempt for Pennsylvania civilians, and the tortuous relations between the two communities during the winter. Soldiers already angered by Pennsylvanians’ lethargic cooperation in the defense of their own state, and inclined to wonder why they were going hungry in America’s Middle Atlantic grainbelt, now learned that they would have to make even more sacrifices for the protection of the Revolution’s “friends” in Pennsylvania.¹¹³ Washington remained bitter about the Remonstrance throughout the winter. In March he told Pennsylvania authorities that his troops had “a peculiar Claim” on the material largesse of the “Gentlemen of this State . . . as it was greatly owing to their Apprehensions and Anxieties expressed in a Memorial to Congress that the present position [i.e., Valley Forge] was had.”¹¹⁴ Understanding Valley Forge in this “political” manner—as a clash of joined interests that did *not* have an inherently “best” solution, rather than an abstract, disembodied, almost natural disaster enacted in a bare, snowy wilderness—may endow that episode with more meaning than we have previously suspected.¹¹⁵

As for Pennsylvania’s political dynamics, the decision for Valley Forge has a dual significance. It underlines the reality of the state’s “internal revolution,” and

the vulnerability that circumstance conferred on the state and on the Revolution itself. But it may also help to narrow the dimensions of that phenomenon. Members of Pennsylvania's precariously balanced Whig community, represented by the self-proclaimed "Gentlemen" then running its government and the politicized "Lower Sort," who had brought them to power, did *not* respond to military invasion by falling upon each other, as they would in 1779 under the different pressures of economic collapse.¹¹⁶ It may be worth some effort to know just why this was the case. But Joseph Reed might better have called his colleagues' desperate if timely intervention in the debate over the army's winter disposition "doing what we *must*" to preserve Pennsylvania's precarious revolution and protect as many of its inhabitants as possible.

Notes

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1. The 1777 Pennsylvania campaign has been ably narrated by John F. Reed, in *Campaign to Valley Forge* (Philadelphia, 1965). For a shorter, more analytical account, emphasizing the state of the Continental army at the end of the campaign, see Wayne Bodle, "The Vortex of Small Fortunes: The Continental Army at Valley Forge, 1777-1778" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987), ch. 2.
2. For a discussion of this image and citations to the popular historical literature in which it is situated see Bodle, "Vortex of Small Fortunes," ch. 1, esp. 4-10.
3. See Reed, *Campaign to Valley Forge*, 393-395; David G. Martin, *The Philadelphia Campaign: June 1777 - July 1778* (Conshohocken, PA, 1993), 167-169.
4. See Supreme Executive Council, "Remonstrance of Council and Assembly to Congress, 1777," in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives* (Philadelphia, 1853), Series 1, Vol. 6, 104-105. [hereafter "Pennsylvania Remonstrance," December 1777.].
5. Benjamin Newcomb, "Washington's Generals and the Decision to Quarter at Valley Forge," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* [PMHB] CXVII (1993), 309-29. Newcomb reviews the range of academic arguments on the subject, 309-311.
6. It is *not* contended here that Pennsylvania's leaders were in a position to, or that they even tried to, coerce or compel that decision, as the authors cited in note 3 suggest. See John Shy, "The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War," in *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York, 1976), 195-224, and esp. 197, for an analysis of the war as a revolutionary "process."
7. Jedediah Huntington to his father, November 11, 1777, Jedediah Huntington Letters, Connecticut Historical Society [CHS].
8. See "Pennsylvania Remonstrance, December 1777," for an after-the-fact but coherent statement of the state's position.
9. Anne M. Ousterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York, 1987), ch. 5.
10. The standard study of this topic is still Robert L. Davidson, *War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania* (New York, 1957). Davidson sees the policy of peace as collapsing along with Quaker political power during the Seven Years' War (ch. 10). It now seems clear, however, that Quakers retained effective control of Pennsylvania until the eve of the Revolution, and that their military shield over the province remained essentially intact, with some important and obvious exceptions in the backcountry.
11. See Robert L. Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (Philadelphia, 1942), esp. ch. 2; on the "overthrow" of proprietary government, see David Freeman Hawke, *In the Midst of a Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1958); see also Douglas M. Arnold, *A Republican Revolution: Ideology and Politics in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (New York, 1989), esp. 58-148.
12. Wayne Bodle, "This Tory Labyrinth: Community, Conflict, and Military Strategy During the Valley Forge Winter," in Michael Zuckerman, ed., *Friends and Neighbors: Group Life in America's First Plural Society* (Philadelphia, 1982), 222-250, esp. 240-241.
13. For discussions of this reorganization and its effect on the functioning of the army's logistical systems, see Jacqueline Thibaut, *This Fatal Crisis: Logistics, Supply and the Continental Army at Valley Forge, 1777-1778*, Volume Two of *The Valley Forge*

Historical Research Report (Valley Forge, PA, 1980), ch. 1; E. Wayne Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill, 1984), ch. 2, esp. 38-44.

14. See H. James Henderson, *Party Politics in the Continental Congress* (New York, 1974), esp. chs. 5, 6, and 7. Henderson emphasizes the regional, and secondarily the ideological, bases of division, and he consciously characterizes the patterns of division among members as indicating loosely-organized "parties." Henderson depicts the "Eastern" bloc as "republican purists" who favored short-term army enlistments and a reliance on militia where possible, austerity in the personal affairs of public servants, and clear lines of division between public and private financial affairs. Southerners were more sympathetic to the needs of the regular army and the pretensions of its officers, and tolerant of mixed public-private ventures and the use of commercial incentives to spur public policy. Middle States delegates shifted between and sometimes reshaped these alignments depending on changing political trends in their own states. See also Henderson, "The Structure of Politics in the Continental Congress," in Steven G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1973), 157-196, and esp. 180-187. For a contrary view, denying the existence of parties and even discounting the prevalence of systematic division within the Congress, see Jack N. Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* (New York, 1979), esp. chs. 7-10.

15. Rakove, *Beginnings*, 116-117, and ch. 8, esp. 176-182; Henderson, *Party Politics*, ch. 6, esp. 146-152.

16. See, for example, the acrimonious dispute earlier in 1777 over the command of the technically independent "Northern" army in the Hudson Valley. Jonathan Gregory Rossie, *The Politics of Command in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY, 1975), chs. 8-11; John S. Pancake, *1777: The Year of the Hangman* (University, AL, 1977), 146-150.

17. William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke, November 30, 1777, in Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress* [hereafter *LDC*], (Washington, DC, 1776-), 8: 347.

18. Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson, November 30, 1777, *ibid.*, 348.

19. William Duer to James Wilson, November 30, 1777, *ibid.*, 345.

20. Henry Laurens to John Rutledge, December 1, 1777, *ibid.*, 360.

21. Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, [JCC]* (Washington, DC, 1904-37), 9: 972. The decision was recorded in the minutes as "unanimous." The delegation consisted of Robert Morris of Pennsylvania, a conservative who usually sided with the southern bloc, Elbridge Gerry, a strong member of the New England party, and Joseph Jones of Virginia, a moderate conservative.

22. William Duer informed James Wilson, a conservative Pennsylvania lawyer and an opponent of the 1776 Pennsylvania constitution, that the committee had been sent to camp, adding darkly that "the Motive of their Embassy you will be at no Loss I imagine to determine." Duer to Wilson, November 30, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 345. James Lovell, a New England radical, told John Adams that Gerry had been named to the group, whose task was to "put an end to the Idea of *retiring* into winter quarters, an Idea too much entertained by our Military Officers." He added pointedly that the conference was "to be with the General *only*." Lovell to Adams, November 28, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 337 (emphasis in original). For almost exactly the same language from a Pennsylvania radical living in Lancaster and carefully observing the Congress, see *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall, 1774-1781* [December 5, 1777], William Duane, ed. (Albany, NY, 1877), 147. The Congressional resolution made the same point in rhetorically redundant terms by describing the intended meeting as "a private confidential consultation" with Washington.

23. Washington to Joseph Reed, December 2, 1777, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, (Washington, DC, 1931-1944) 10: 133 [WGW]. Washington told a subordinate the week before that the "current sentiment" in the army "as far as I can collect it, without making it a matter of question, is in favour of our taking Post on the other side Schuylkill." Washington to Nathanael Greene, November 26, 1777, *ibid.*, 107-8. This curiously detached observation, which hints at a reluctance on Washington's part to invoke formally any deliberative processes, does not suggest whether this meant the army would remove a great distance from Philadelphia, or reveal Washington's preferences. But on the same day his close aide, John Laurens, expressed to his father, the President of Congress, some of the advantages of a post on the west side of the Schuylkill. John Laurens to Henry Laurens, November 26, 1777, David R. Chesnutt, et al., eds., *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia, SC, 1968-), 12:90-91.

24. Washington to Reed, December 2, 1777, WGW 10:133. "Embarrassed" should be understood here in its eighteenth century meaning of "confused" or "undecided." Reed, who was serving as a roving "volunteer" with the army prior to taking his seat in Congress after the campaign, was away from Whitemarsh when Washington polled the generals. He received an urgent letter from John Cadwallader, a brigadier in the Pennsylvania militia, outlining the verbal options under discussion among the generals and asking him to "come here tomorrow & advise" Washington. A letter from Reed to Washington dated December 1 acknowledged that the army was in no condition either to stay in the field or attack Philadelphia. Reed expressed the fear that withdrawing to the interior would "expose . . . a great number of good whigs to absolute ruin" and permit "every species of seduction and intimidation [to be] practiced" by the enemy. As a result, he lamented "there would be great danger of their raising a considerable party" of loyalists. Reed closed with a perplexing proposal for a Continental attack

on the British headquarters in New York City, which seems to contradict his other advice. This letter may have been in response to Cadwallader's plea, but it was not counted by Washington among the responses to his poll. John Cadwallader to Joseph Reed, November 30, 1777; Reed to Washington, December 1, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, New-York Historical Society [NYHS].

25. These opinions are found in the George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Series 4, Reel 45. [GWP-LC]. Benjamin Newcomb is the first historian to have made systematic use of these microfilm documents in "Washington's Generals."

26. "Recruiting" clearly included the process of augmenting the army's size that we associate with the term, but seems to have connoted more the eighteenth century medical meaning of the term: to improve in health or strength by resting.

27. See the opinions of Generals Johan De Kalb, Henry Knox, William Maxwell, Peter Muhlenberg, Enoch Poor, John Sullivan, James Varnum, George Weedon, and William Woodford, all of whom recommended the Reading-Lancaster line, all dated December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45. Some respondents offered various steps that might be taken, in conjunction with the army's retirement inland, to give protection to civilians left behind.

28. *Ibid.* See especially Weedon's recommendations.

29. Muhlenberg, Poor, Weedon, and Woodford were the Virginians. Henry Knox came from Massachusetts, John Sullivan from New Hampshire, and James Varnum from Rhode Island. Johan De Kalb was a Bavarian volunteer, while William Maxwell lived in New Jersey.

30. The generals who recommended Wilmington, or its vicinity, were: Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island, the Marquis de Lafayette and Louis LeBeque DuPortaille, two Frenchmen, William Smallwood, of Maryland, Charles Scott of Virginia, Anthony Wayne, of Pennsylvania, and John Armstrong of the Pennsylvania militia.

31. Opinion of Nathanael Greene, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45. Greene's disclaimer

suggests that perhaps this issue of "popularity" had become a matter of explicit debate among the general officers. Greene also rationalized that "total relaxation" was not desirable for the troops for the winter. Rather, he claimed, a post closer to Philadelphia that allowed "partial" relaxation would at once restore the morale of the soldiers, maintain their discipline and discourage dissipation, and minimize "distress to the Inhabitants of the State." Washington, after he had chosen Valley Forge, borrowed from Greene's argument on this point.

32. Opinion of the Marquis de Lafayette, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45, Lafayette concluded that these "shining and military like" needs demanded sending the army to Wilmington.

33. Opinion of John Armstrong, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45.

34. Opinion of Anthony Wayne, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45.

35. Opinion of Louis LeBeque Du Portaille, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45 (emphasis added). William Smallwood of Maryland also voted for Wilmington. His explicit denial of "local attachment" as a legitimate consideration in the matter points toward just that element in his preference for an adjacent state. Charles Scott of Virginia voted for Wilmington while declining to offer his reasons. Opinions of Smallwood and Scott, *ibid.*

36. Opinion of Lord Stirling, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45. Henry Lutterloh, the German-born deputy quartermaster general, recommended a dispersed arrangement east of the Schuylkill River, with the "van" of the army near Germantown, its headquarters at Pottsgrove, its supply bases near Reading, and mobile detachments to give "covering the country" a material rather than a metaphorical meaning. Opinion of Henry Lutterloh, *ibid.* Lutterloh was the only member of any of the army staff departments who participated in the poll, probably because of the responsibilities his organization would have for sustaining the army wherever it went. His recommendation in some

respects more accurately predicted the sprawling "crescent"-shaped disposition that Washington ultimately arranged than did the advice of any of the generals. See also note 70, below.

37. Opinion of James Irvine, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45.

38. Washington to Reed, December 2, 1777, *WGW*, 10: 133. His wording may also imply his understanding of the "disposition" question as an implicitly political one. The "general sentiment" for Reading-Lancaster suggests "the generals' sentiment," or even "the general's sentiment," while "powerful advocates" seems to allude to the affiliations of Wilmington's backers more than to their analytical power or personal forcefulness.

39. Washington to Horatio Gates, December 2, 1777, *WGW*, 10: 133. See Newcomb, "Washington's Generals," 321, for the insightful suggestion that Washington's preference was at least implied, if not signalled, by his manner of stating the results of the poll. If advocates of the huddled encampment in the field are added to those recommending Wilmington, then the general officers were effectively deadlocked between the plan for relocating the army to interior Pennsylvania towns and the proposal for keeping it more closely engaged with the enemy.

40. Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 380.

41. Washington, "Circular to the General Officers," December 3, 1777, *WGW*, 10: 135. These opinions had apparently been requested previously, independent of the committee's apprehended visit, but Washington pressed the generals to expedite their answers in expectation of that visit. See also Committee at Headquarters to Laurens, December 6, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 380. Under normal circumstances it would seem to be an inversion of sound military procedure for a commander first to determine where the army should camp for the winter, and then to reopen the question of its continued operation in the field.

42. The divisions were Generals John Cadwallader,

John Armstrong, James Irvine, James Potter, and Anthony Wayne, in favor of a winter campaign, and Generals Nathanael Greene, Henry Knox, Lord Stirling, James Varnum, William Maxwell, Peter Muhlenberg, John Patterson, Richard Poor, Charles Scott, William Smallwood, James Sullivan, George Weedon and William Woodford, opposed in varying degrees of intensity. Louis Du Portaille and the Marquis de Lafayette withheld their sentiments on the question, and Johan De Kalb qualified his opinion so carefully that he could be read as in favor of either option on both questions, depending on the circumstances. The opinions are dated December 3 and 4, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 46.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.* See the opinions of Generals Irvine and Wayne.

45. Robert Morris to Thomas Wharton, November 30, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 352-353.

46. "In Council of Safety," November 28, 1777, *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1852), 11: 350-351. The identity and background of James Young, Esquire, are obscure.

47. *JCC*, 9: 976.

48. John Laurens to Henry Laurens, December 3, 1777, Chesnutt, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 12: 129-130. Laurens effectively loaded the question by his own rhetorical description of the possibilities. But then he suggested a compromise position "which will not absolutely expose us to a Winters Campaign, but furnish us excellent Quarters for men at the same time that it leaves us within distance for taking considerable advantages of the Enemy—and covering a valuable and extensive Country."

49. Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, December 3, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 373. Gerry managed to have this conclusion inserted into a preliminary report to Congress three days later. See Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 381.

50. Gerry to Adams, December 3, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 373.

51. *Ibid.*

52. As the Council of Safety had feared, Washington at first took personally the very thrust of their mission. He invited the committeemen to compare the Pennsylvania troops with the rest of the army, which satisfied them that the former were not much worse clothed than their brethren. Col. John Bayard to President Wharton, December 4, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives* Ser. 1, Vol. 6 (Philadelphia, 1853), 61. For the Council's apprehension of such a development, and instructions to the delegates on how to avoid it, see *Minutes of the Council of Safety* (Philadelphia, 1852), 11: 350-351.

53. Bayard to Wharton, December 4, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives* Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 61.

54. *Ibid.* Bayard made clear that his continuance at camp would depend as much on the "determinations of the Council respecting going into Quarters" as on his formal mandate to review the clothing situation.

55. "Robert Morris' Committee Notes," [c. December 4, 1777]; Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 377-378, 380-381. Elbridge Gerry, an acknowledged partisan in the discussions, suggested privately that the committee came to the second meeting resolved to overcome the objections of the officers, but that their intentions were disrupted by the arrival of the British. Gerry to James Warren, December 12, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 404.

56. Reed, *Campaign to Valley Forge*, 372-380. The British troops skirmished with the Pennsylvania militia, captured militia General Irvine, and destroyed large amounts of civilian property.

57. The British withdrew under cover of night, leaving the field littered with equipment and the Americans howling with scorn. See Benjamin Talmadge to Jeremiah Wadsworth, December 9, 1777, Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers: Correspondence, CHS. The Americans were quick to claim victory by default, and the boasting, even derisive tone of their letters rivaled those they had written in the optimistic weeks following

Germantown. On the upbeat mood of the American officer corps in the aftermath of the Germantown battle see Bodle, "Vortex of Small Fortunes," 62-67. For the similar sentiments that greeted the British retreat from Whitemarsh, see: Jedediah Huntington to Joshua Huntington, December 9, 1777, Jedediah Huntington Letters, CHS; Jedediah Huntington to Joseph Trumbull, December 10, 1777, Joseph Trumbull Papers, CHS; John Steel Tyler to ?, December 10, 1777, John Reed Collection, Valley Forge National Historical Park; Benjamin Talmadge to Jeremiah Wadsworth, December 9, 1777, Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers: Correspondence, CHS.

58. Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, December 8, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 388.

59. Cornelius Hartnett to Thomas Burke, December 8, 1777, *ibid.*, 389.

60. John Armstrong to the Supreme Executive Council, December 7/9, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 71; Elias Boudinot to Thomas Wharton, December 9, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, NYHS, Reel 2; Joseph Reed to "Dear Sir" [Thomas Wharton], December 10, 1777, *ibid.*

61. Joseph Reed to [Thomas Wharton], December 10, 1777, *ibid.*

62. James Young left camp for Easton by December 8 to investigate the collection of clothing there, the stated point of the committee's visit. See James Young to Thomas Wharton, December 8, 1777, Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, RG-27, Reel 13, frames 200-201, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission [PHMC]. But Bayard's remark about staying at Whitemarsh until the army's disposition was settled, and Young's referral to Bayard "for other particulars of what past between his Excellency general & us in Camp, &c." suggests the continuing involvement of the state emissaries in the larger question of winter tactics and quarters.

63. John Armstrong to Thomas Wharton, December 7/[9], 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 71-72. Armstrong told Wharton that he

"suppose[d] our next movement is the subject [of the summons], & perhaps the much heavier point—a dispossession of this Army for the Winter." He called the latter "a point . . . of the utmost importance to Pennsylv[ania], and to which I have paid & shall pay every degree of attention in my power."

64. Committee at Headquarters to George Washington, December 10, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 399. The committee members proposed to address the officers' grievances with recommendations to Congress for military pensions, reforms in the distribution of military rank, and vague promises to improve the payment for back rations.

65. *Ibid.*, 400. The latter quotes are from a memorandum from the committee to Congress appended to their letter to Washington.

66. Joseph Reed to Thomas Wharton, December 10, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, NYHS, reel 2.

67. Joseph Reed to Thomas Wharton, December 13, 1777, *ibid.* Reed and Cadwallader both served in a kind of roving capacity with the Pennsylvania militia during the fall campaign as a way of bolstering resistance to the British invasion while formally keeping at least at arms-length from state government operations. They moved through Chester County in late October "to gain a thorough knowledge of the Country" in support of the effort to hold the river forts that prevented the British from supplying their troops from their fleet. They had "perfectly agreed" that the army should move to the west side of the Schuylkill River then, but were unanimously opposed by the Continental officers. This scouting expedition may have provided one of the leads to Valley Forge. Together with Cadwallader's appeal to Reed on November 30 (see note 24, above), it suggests their close and continuing cooperation in shepherding the state's interests. See Joseph Reed to [Thomas Wharton?], October 30, 1777, *ibid.*

68. "Order of March from Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania," [December 10, 1777] in Richard Showman, ed., *The Papers of Nathanael Greene*

(Chapel Hill, 1976-), 2: 238-241. This draft order was signed by General John Sullivan, of New Hampshire, "in behalf of the whole," in deference to the seniority of his rank. It was written in Greene's hand, however, which lends credence to Reed's statement that Greene helped to formulate the revised plan for the army's disposition.

69. *Ibid.*; William Maxwell, a brigadier from New Jersey, had just entreated Washington to send "some Continental troops" to his state, to relieve its militia and enable the state to later fill its Continental recruiting quotas. William Maxwell to Washington, December 9, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 46.

70. "Order of March from Whitemarsh" [December 10, 1777], 239. The outlines of this plan conformed in remarkable detail to the actual disposition of Continental and state forces through the Philadelphia region, once Washington had established the army at Valley Forge and had an opportunity to distribute his troops. For characterizations of that "crescent-shaped" disposition, see Bodle, "Vortex of Small Fortunes," 130-133, 192-193, 223-226.

71. "Order of March from Whitemarsh" [December 10, 1777], 240.

72. The orders specified, for example, that on "the first day's march, the head of the Column [would] reach the Lancaster Road." Such a movement would have carried the army beyond Valley Forge. "Order of March from Whitemarsh" [December 10, 1777], 239, in Showman, *Greene Papers*, 2: 239.

73. Reed, *Campaign to Valley Forge*, 384-387.

74. Joseph Reed to Thomas Wharton, December 13, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, NYHS, Reel 2.

75. *Ibid.* The result of this change, Reed lamented, was that "Whig inhabitants [west of the Schuylkill] must fly." He reiterated his "zeal in the cause [which] will vindicate me from all suspicion of Whimsical Caprice and Dissatisfaction . . ."

76. "Order of March from Whitemarsh," [December 10, 1777], in Showman, *Greene Papers*, 2: 239. Reed may have misconstrued the meaning of Greene's phrase "to serve as a covering party" to

conclude that the brigade in question would cover the Pennsylvania countryside rather than the army's movement across the river. He complained bitterly that New Jersey, which retained all of its own militia "will not be satisfied without a cover of Continental Troops," possibly referring to Maxwell's intervention with Washington on his state's behalf on December 9. New Jersey did not receive the brigade mentioned in Greene's plan, probably because Washington decided that it would afford little protection and because he needed the unit at Valley Forge.

77. Elias Boudinot to Thomas Wharton, December 9, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, NYHS, Reel 2.

78. Jedediah Huntington to Andrew Huntington, December 9, 1777, Jedediah Huntington Papers, CHS; Huntington to Col. Joseph Trumbull, December 10, 1777, Joseph Trumbull Papers, CHS. Huntington had depicted himself as an involved participant in the deliberations in November, but he now perceived himself (perhaps with the rest of the generals) as little more than an observer. It is not clear why no memoranda from Huntington from either the November 30 poll on winter quarters or the December 4 opinion on a winter campaign survive in Washington's papers.

79. James Potter to President Thomas Wharton, December 11, 1777; John Armstrong to President Thomas Wharton, December 14, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 83, 90-91.

80. *Ibid.* Potter perceptively defined the role of the militia, now assured of the support—or at least the close company—of the Continental Army, as being one of keeping "all the Tories in this County in fear, if not in order."

81. Thomas Wharton to Elias Boudinot, December 13, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 89. Wharton was reduced to expressing the "hope" that the army would not retire, and that if it remained near Philadelphia it might have a chance to attack the enemy. His embarrassment at the "base conduct" of the state's militia during the Whitemarsh skirmishes may have overcome his capacity for outrage at the army's possible withdrawal.

82. *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council*, 11: 386.

83. *Ibid.*

84. "Pennsylvania Remonstrance" [December 1777], *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 104-105. The Pennsylvania authorities added that they would be unable to collect enough taxes to meet their financial commitments to Congress in support of the war; that recruiting for the state's Continental regiments would collapse; and that withdrawal would destroy the credit of Continental money in Pennsylvania. The remonstrance is undated, but was probably drawn up on December 15, and in any case no later than December 17.

85. *Ibid.*

86. John Laurens to Hanry Laurens, December 15, 1777, Chesnutt, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 12: 157-158. The new position, Laurens said, would be "far enough from the Enemy not to be reached in a days march, and properly interposed between the Enemy and the most valuable part of the Country on this side Schuylkil."

87. John Armstrong to Thomas Wharton, December 16, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser. 1, Vol. 6, 101.

88. John Fitzgerald to John Clarke, December 16, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 46 [emphasis in original]; Mordecai Gist to "Sir," December 16, 1777, Gist Papers, Library of Congress; Joseph Ward to Samuel Adams, December 17, 1777, Joseph Ward Papers, typescript, Chicago Historical Society. Ward revealingly observed that the army's movement across the Schuylkill on December 11 had been "determined" upon the preceeding evening and very few, not even all the generals, knew that we would march." He was explaining his presumption that the British foraging party that attacked the vanguard that day could not have known about the movement, but his comment again suggests the importance of December 9 and 10 in the evolution of the decision about winter quarters.

89. Washington, "General Orders," December 17, 1777, *WGW*, 10, 167-168. See, for example, Greene

to Washington, December 1, 1777, GWP-LC, Reel 45, and note 31, above.

90. These proceedings can be followed in *JCC*, 9: 1029-1036. The committee members made an apparently feeble effort to withhold the documents containing the generals' opinions on the ground that Washington had provided them in confidence, but their colleagues ordered their production without debate.

91. *Ibid.*, 1036-1038. Abraham Clark to William Alexander, December 20, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 444.

92. Jonathan Bayard Smith to George Bryan, December 19, 1777 (two letters), *LDC*, 8: 442-444. Bryan was the vice-president of the Supreme Executive Council. Reports are contradictory on what the Congress learned and just when concerning the army's destination. In a postscript dated December 19, William Ellery of Rhode Island wrote that an officer had arrived this day from the army" with the news that the army would "hut this Winter at Valley forge near the Schuylkill & about 20 miles from Philadelphia." But in a December 21 postscript to a letter dated December 19, Ellery told another correspondent that the same officer "arrived in Town this Evening" with the same news. See William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke, December 17/19, 1777, and William Ellery to Ezra Stiles, December 19/21, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 429-430, 440-441. Abraham Clark of New Jersey claimed to know by December 20 that the army "are Sitting down in the Valley." Abraham Clark to William Alexander, December 20, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 444-445.

93. Henderson, *Party Politics in the Continental Congress*, esp. chs. 5-7; Henderson, "Structure of Politics in the Continental Congress," in Kurtz and Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution*, 157-196.

94. *Ibid.*; see also Rossie, *Politics of Command*, chs. 10-11.

95. Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania*, chs. 2-3.

96. *JCC*, 9: 976-978 [November 28, 1777]. Significantly, it was Morris who his colleagues sent

to camp to press for the "winter's campaign," while dispatching Roberdeau to Lancaster to confer with state leaders on ways of moving provisions to the army. Perhaps more significantly, Roberdeau sent Bryan's hint "that military aid would be necessary" to his friend Gerry at camp. The remark probably related to a narrowly technical matter concerning the division of labor in transporting salt, but it could easily have been construed as a signal about the state's desires for the army's winter disposition. See Roberdeau to Gerry, December 6, 1777, *LDC*, 8:35.

97. See John F. Roche, *Joseph Reed: A Moderate in the American Revolution* (New York, 1957), 76-83; Richard Alan Ryerson, "*The Revolution Is Now Begun*": *The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776* (Philadelphia, 1978), 156-169, 219-220. For accounts of Reed's "confusion" and "indecisiveness" in this crisis, see Ryerson, 172n, and David Freeman Hawke, *In The Midst of a Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1961), 140.

98. Roche, *Joseph Reed*, 114-125.

99. *Ibid.*, 116-117, 120-122.

100. *Ibid.*, 125.

101. For Bayard's involvement in radical Pennsylvania politics between 1774 and early 1776, see Ryerson, *Revolution Is Now Begun*, 132, 191, 205n, 210, 214, 237; Hawke, *Midst of a Revolution*, 100.

102. Ryerson, "*Revolution Is Now Begun*"; 242-243; Theodore Thayer, *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy, 1740-1776* (Harrisburg, PA, 1953), 187-188; Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania*, 18-19; J. Paul Selsam, *The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776: A Study in Revolutionary Democracy* (Philadelphia, 1936), 226-227. Bayard's moderation is illustrated by the fact that historians have classified him as both "an Anticonstitutionalist mainstay throughout the Revolutionary years," and as a staunch "Constitutionalist." The latter characterization is more accurate, but when he reached Whitemarsh in December of 1777, Bayard had long since relinquished the label of "radical." See Arnold, *A*

Republican Revolution, 70 ["Anticonstitutionalist mainstay"]; and Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania*, 56 ["true Radical"]. Steven Rosswurm without hesitation called Bayard a "Radical." *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" During the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (New Brunswick, 1987), 47.

103. See the sketch of Thomas Cadwallader (1707-1799), in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1928-1936) 2: 400. The elder Cadwallader was a member of the Philadelphia Common Council from 1750 to 1774, and of the proprietor's Provincial Council from 1755 to 1776.

104. Milton E. Flower, *John Dickinson, Conservative Revolutionary* (Charlottesville, VA, 1983), 87.

105. Ryerson, "*Revolution is Now Begun*," 214; Hawke, *Midst of a Revolution*, 135-6. In June 1776 Cadwallader offended the militia by refusing to poll his conservative "'Silk Stocking' Battalion" on their relative support for the Assembly or the extra-legal committees. Ryerson, "*Revolution is Now Begun*," 227. Two months later he opposed popular demands to allow the militia companies to elect their own officers. Early in 1777 he refused a commission as a brigadier general in the army rather than swear not to take steps detrimental to the constitution, although he continued to lead militiamen as a "volunteer." Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class*, 99-100; Hawke, *Midst of a Revolution*, 195-196.

106. John Cadwallader to Joseph Reed, December 10, 1777, Joseph Reed Papers, NYHS, Reel 2.

107. For a particularly strong statement of the view that it *was* so imposed, see Reed, *Campaign to Valley Forge*, 393-394.

108. Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson, December 8, 1777, *LDC*, 8: 390-391.

109. *Ibid.*, 391.

110. See Bodle, "This Tory Labyrinth," 222-250 for a detailed discussion of this point.

111. Washington characterized the Remonstrance as patently unfair, and he used it to help persuade Congress to send another committee to camp during the winter to consult with him on comprehensive

organizational reforms. See Washington to the President of Congress, December 22 and December 23, 1777, in *WGW*, 10: 183-188, 192-198. The points in this paragraph are discussed in much fuller detail in Bodle, "Vortex of Small Fortunes," 157-168, and ch. 5.

112. Washington to the President of Congress, December 23, 1777, *WGW*, 10: 195-6. Washington used the phrase, or variants of it, three times, each one in contemptuous tones. "We find Gentlemen without knowing whether the Army was really going into Winter Quarters or not . . . reprobating the measure"; "These very Gentn. who were well apprized of the nakedness of the Troops, from occular demonstration"; "I can assure those Gentlemen that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fire side than to occupy a cold bleak hill and sleep under frost and Snow." Pennsylvania's "internal" revolution, of course, was largely about the replacement of the state's old Proprietary and Quaker "Gentry" leaders with "new men" of more diverse social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. How Washington, with his Virginia planter's mentalité, measured the pretended social status of even such established political actors as John Cadwallader, is an interesting question.

113. See Bodle, "This Tory Labyrinth," 225-226, for a discussion of this point.

114. Washington to Thomas Wharton, March 7, 1778, *WGW*, 11: 46-47. Newcomb rightly observes that the Remonstrance did not *produce* the Valley Forge decision because it postdated the decision. He dismisses the document as "bluster, not strategy." But Washington's meaning in this letter is that the Remonstrance *summarized* and articulated positions that the state had been advancing all along, and should thus be taken seriously. See "Washington's Generals," 322-323.

115. Charles Royster's masterful study, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill, 1979), ch. 5, esp. 192-194, sees the Valley Forge winter as an important and even a defining stage in the growing alienation between the army and the broader civilian community. This episode supports that view, while suggesting that those divisions may have widened more suddenly than Royster allows at the winter's outset, and because of the process by which the decision for Valley Forge was reached.

116. Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class*, esp. ch. 6, 7; John K. Alexander, "The Fort Wilson Incident of 1779: A Case Study of the Revolutionary Crowd," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 31 (1974), 589-612.