

Introduction

Robert M. Calhoon

University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Loyalism in the American Revolution had several meanings. It was, pre-eminently, continued allegiance to the British Crown after the thirteen American states had declared their independence. But loyalism also signified varying degrees of pro-British participation in the Revolutionary struggle and involvement in the post-Revolutionary settlement—bearing arms, swearing allegiance, doing business with the British Army, choosing exile, seeking compensation from the Crown or restitution of property from the patriots. As loyalism shaded away from overt group allegiance to self-protective personal conduct, it resembled more and more the simple disaffection of neutralists and opportunists.

Five elements collectively shaped Pennsylvania's handling of loyalists and others disaffected from the Revolution: first, the new, socially marginal leadership of the regime which seized power in 1776; second, a strain of communal virtue which stressed republican ideology; third, a deep split between republican radicals and moderate Whig leaders; fourth, the moderating influence of a large apolitical mass of the populace which resisted politicization; and fifth, war-induced social banditry which erupted in the late 1770s and severely tested legal institutions.

More than anywhere else in Revolutionary America, the Revolution in Pennsylvania brought new men into positions of power. The swift transit from the fringes of society to the center of power prompted the Pennsylvania radicals—men like Timothy Matlack, Thomas Paine, James Cannon, and George Bryan—to embrace a republican ideology of communal virtue and to minimize the value of mixed constitutions and bicameral legislatures as safeguards of liberty. Their refusal to compromise with traditional Whig leaders—men like John Dickinson and James Wilson who feared the divisive effects of radicalism on Pennsylvania society and drew ideological guidance from a wider spectrum of Lockean and republican thought—took the form of strong-armed tactics like oaths of allegiance, treason and counterfeiting prosecutions, and confiscation of loyalist property intended to coerce the regime's opponents into obedience. These harsh measures endangered and alienated many elements in Pennsylvania's religiously and ethnically pluralist social order—Anglicans prizing order, Presbyterians practicing moderation, Quakers espousing peace, German pietists resisting politicization. This religious and ethnic opposition to the Revolution was so diverse, so numerous, and so interwoven with the social order that radicals could not realize their goal of disciplining and mobilizing the state behind the Revolution and in support of the radical Constitution of 1776 which institutionalized a single-house legislature elected by broad suffrage. Finally, in the closing stages of the War for Independence, loyalist outlaws operating beyond the law

but with widespread public support imperiled order and jeopardized the preservation of the people's government.

This special issue of *Pennsylvania History* examines the complex historical puzzle of loyalism and disaffection in Revolutionary Pennsylvania. J. Walter High and Kevin Dellape explore the origins of Anglican moderation through an examination of the careers of the clerics Thomas Coombe and Jacob Duché. Anglican priests dependent on the support of the Church of England hierarchy, they had learned the politics of patronage and interest on which moderate governance of the Empire depended. Pre-Revolutionary controversy attenuated their loyalties; paradoxically, Coombe adhered to the crown as a matter of conscience rather than as a conventional Anglican duty while Duché, who at first embraced resistance, balked at independence and the disorder it brought.

Judith Van Buskirk explores the radical-moderate split from the perspective of loyalist women who coped with overwhelming anxiety and outrage as they sought to protect themselves and their beleaguered families in a male-dominated, coercive Revolutionary environment. Absent husbands, hostile crowds in the streets, loneliness, fear, and moral outrage all thrust these women into conflicts in which their gender handicapped them.

For Anne M. Ousterhout, such local complexity renders obsolete the traditional terminology of "loyalist" and "patriot." The farther away from Philadelphia and its environs, the more engulfed local people were in conflicts over land and physical security. The complex struggle in the Wyoming Valley between settlers holding titles from the state of Pennsylvania ("Pennamites") and from the Susquehannah Company (of Connecticut) powerfully illustrated the breakdown of order on the frontier. The two groups did not think of themselves as patriot or loyalist; rather, the circumstances of settlement in the Wyoming Valley, and the dynamics of the military struggle between the British and the Americans in the region, polarized the two groups into tory Pennamites and patriot Yankees.

James Farley, in his article on the Quaker merchant, Richard Vaux and the "ill-fated voyage of the *Providentia*," examines in detail the mechanics and perils of overseas trade conducted by loyalists during the War for Independence. Trouble finally caught up with Vaux in 1781 during a potentially lucrative voyage from London to the West Indies by Vaux's ship, the *Providentia*. The irony of the ship's name is emblematic. Either divine protection guarded Vaux's mercantile ventures until late in the Revolutionary war, or else in 1781 Providence, or fate, turned capricious.

Finally, Rosemary S. Warden discovers James Fitzpatrick, one of the several loyalist bandits who flourished amid the shaky system of law enforcement in the state during the late 1770s and early 1780s and in areas prone to neutralism and outright disaffection. Her essay ends with a gruesome account of Fitzpatrick's botched hanging—a powerful reminder of the brutish underside of revolutionary conflict.

These essays bring readers into contact with the daily experience and myriad human dilemmas of people disaffected from the Revolution, and with local patriots who struggled to overcome opposition without harming the very social order the Revolution in Pennsylvania sought to liberate and govern. The six authors remind us of the diversity of the loyalist experience. Allegiance during the Revolution, for both sides, was a complex mixture of ideas, interests, and individual mentalities and experiences both before and during the evolving conflict.