

Identity and Revolution: Everyday Life and Crisis in Three Delaware River Towns

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The American Revolution in the Delaware Valley succeeded in ending colonial rule by mobilizing people who became increasingly aware of the importance of diverse forms of personal and group identity. Because these identities were the product of distinct local conditions, this central transforming feature of the Revolution can best be understood by focusing on particular places. New Castle, Delaware, Burlington, New Jersey, and Easton, Pennsylvania were ordinary towns on the banks of the Delaware River where no heralded revolutionary events occurred. Their significance arises because the experiences of residents in each town reveals how the assault on the colonial social order forced politics beyond narrow boundaries. The revolutionary expansion of politics altered relationships among local identities.

This analysis builds on the main thrust in neo-Progressive interpretations of the Revolution that see it as a conflict-ridden event. However, the argument presented here departs from the neo-Progressive approach which primarily focuses on the largest colonial cities and tends to identify class-based grievances as the central key to the Revolution.¹ The revolutionary conflict in the three towns examined here never emerged in starkly economic terms. By focusing on particular places in careful detail and insisting that the Revolution needs to be understood as a lived experience, the argument here also dissents from the most influential recent interpretation of the era. The study of “republicanism,” and political culture more broadly, too often accepts elite discourse on its own terms without establishing what this language meant in the context of everyday life.²

The experiences of residents of New Castle, Burlington, and Easton demonstrate that the Revolution politicized a range of interlocking identities in the multicultural Delaware Valley. While the particular issues that came to the fore during the Revolution in these three river towns differed according to their local circumstances, people in all three places shared a common revolutionary experience. The formation of meaningful new social roles as patriot or loyalist built upon and disrupted preexisting relationships among religious, ethnic, racial, gender, and status identities. The American Revolution had enormous radical potential precisely because it inaugurated a transformation from a colonial to a national social order where the relationship among diverse local identities would be renegotiated.

This understanding of the Revolution stems from a regional focus on the Delaware Valley. The towns were selected from distinct areas along a 130-mile run of the Delaware River. Located about 30 miles south of Philadelphia New Castle was the most important port below the metropolis in the 1770s. Burlington lies only 20 miles north of the city, but across the river in New Jersey. Meanwhile, Easton stands at the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers about 80 miles north of Burlington by water, but only 65 miles from Philadelphia on the more direct land route. These river towns are appropriate units for comparison since they all entered the Revolution as county seats and were market, political, and legal centers for their surrounding rural areas. They also were similar in size with populations of about 350 inhabitants each during the Revolution. These Philadelphia-hinterland towns shared common functions as small urban centers in rural settings.

Although the structural similarities among the towns are crucial for a meaningful comparison, their most important common quality was diversity. As the historian Jack Greene has observed, "more than any other region of colonial British America, the Middle Colonies were a pluralistic society containing a large variety of linguistic, ethnic, and religious groups."³ The towns examined here embrace the diversity of the uniquely pluralistic Delaware Valley. New Castle was founded by Dutch and Swedish settlers in the mid-seventeenth century, before the major English migration to the region. However, by the Revolution the most notable ethno-religious difference in the town separated English Anglicans and Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Burlington was established during the first years of Quaker settlement in the region. By the Revolution, Quakers remained a major local presence there, but a thriving Anglican congregation meant that the town had ceased being a monolithic religious community. Meanwhile, the piedmont town of Easton stood above the falls of the Delaware River at Trenton, which prevented swift European settlement. Founded in 1752, as German migration to the region peaked, the only organized churches in Easton throughout the eighteenth century were Lutheran and German Reformed. Thus, these towns offer representative sites for studying the range of ethnic and religious diversity in the Delaware Valley during the American Revolution.

Local people's awareness of diversity in their towns, however, extended beyond ethnicity and religion. Racial identity was a fundamental component of perceived human difference, and it intensified during the Revolution. African Americans made up a large proportion of New Castle residents in the 1770s, probably around the 20 percent mark that holds roughly constant in the town's surviving census records from 1800 to 1830. The control of slaves played a large role defining the local meaning of the Revolution in New Castle. In the backcountry town of Easton, treaty negotiations with American Indians and the local war fought primarily between white patriots and Indian supporters

of the British heightened awareness of racial identity. The significance of collective racial identity reverberated throughout the Delaware Valley and beyond the towns where African Americans and Native Americans had a notable physical presence. Indian-white relations and the metaphor of slavery were both central themes in revolutionary ideology. Their use implicitly summoned patriots together as white men and increased people's awareness of the importance of human diversity in the American Revolution.

The revolutionary experience of each town will be considered here in succession. Beginning with the politicization of commercial activity with the Tea Act in 1773, religious and racial identities rapidly emerged as major sources of public difference among colonists in the port of New Castle, Delaware. Due to its open and accessible location on the lower Delaware River, New Castle residents had to accommodate both British and American forces during the war. As was the case in all three towns, local sentiments were deeply divided, but patriots galvanized by Scots-Irish Presbyterian leadership ultimately dominated New Castle's political and social life. Whig leaders in New Castle explicitly led a revolution to avoid becoming slaves to the British, but no local patriots linked their revolutionary commitment to freeing African Americans from bondage.

Residents in Burlington, New Jersey, like those in New Castle, experienced the war at first hand because of the town's exposed location on the river and along a main land route between Philadelphia and New York. Both port towns suffered cannonading from the river, but, tellingly, New Castle was attacked by British forces and Burlington was shelled by patriots. Where patriots gradually dominated the divided sentiments of New Castle residents, loyalism was broadly shared in Burlington, especially before the British evacuated Philadelphia and departed the Delaware Valley in June 1777. The motivations behind loyalism were extremely diverse, perhaps even more so than those that led people to support independence. For instance, one careful study of loyalist exiles in Britain found it "practically impossible to delineate any characteristics common to them all."⁴ Narrowing the focus to a particular place, however, allows distinct local conditions to emerge more forcefully. In Burlington, loyalism was largely shaped by strong Anglican and Quaker communities. Both groups were far from monolithic, but the clearest examples of ambivalence and outright hostility toward the rebels came from members of these religious groups.

As in the two other towns, resistance to colonial authority brought serious divisions to the forefront of local life in Easton, Pennsylvania. Hostility between Scots-Irish elites, the main local beneficiaries of the colonial system, and fully-committed patriots caused significant social conflict in the area. Germans, who made up the majority of local residents, could be found on both sides of the political issue. On the one hand many German Americans had good

reason to resent English proprietary rule. As settlers in the broad arc of land outside the original English settlement in the three "old counties on the Delaware," people in Easton were severely under-represented in colonial politics. Quakers and Anglicans dominated formal politics inspite of their declining demographic weight. Given these circumstances one might expect German Americans to be especially bold patriots. But the revolutionary movement also represented a particular threat to German Americans. Swearing an oath of allegiance to the new Pennsylvania state government required that German immigrants explicitly break a previous loyalty oath to the British King and Proprietors, which had been included in the naturalization process when non-Britons arrived in the colony. More generally, Pennsylvania's intense radicalization during the Revolution disturbed many Easton residents and furthered local polarization, which, unlike in the other two towns, bore little relationship to the proximity of the British army. Easton was ultimately a patriot stronghold, but the clearest source of local unity there grew from opposition to American Indians.

The American Revolution heightened social conflict in all three towns. Most significantly, it exacerbated preexisting differences as religious, ethnic, racial, gender, and status identities took on sharper significance during the years of crisis. As patriot and loyalist identities became meaningful marks of difference in revolutionary society, they heightened awareness of the importance of individual allegiance. Patriot and loyalist identities were not carved on a *tabula rasa*, but were grafted onto previous forms of identity. The Revolution forced individuals to make public presentations of self which under ordinary circumstances could have remained discrete or hidden. Thus, the Revolution politicized behavior and self-understanding by elevating the everyday to the extraordinary. Close attention to individuals experiences in New Castle, Burlington, and Easton clarifies how identities grew out of everyday life and how they were altered in the Revolution. The revolutionary movement in the Delaware Valley succeeded because it forced politics beyond preserving the *status quo*. Personal and collective identities played a central role in the revolutionary transformation that inaugurated a sweeping change from colonial to national social organization. In order to understand the crucial place of identities in this process, precise local circumstances must be carefully examined.

New Castle, Delaware, was a divided community in the Revolution, but patriots gradually came to dominance there as radical Presbyterians pushed more cautious Anglicans to support independence. Until the crucial years of 1775 and 1776 when divisive fundamental positions had to be taken, residents in New Castle broadly supported each major political event that ultimately would lead to revolution. From the Stamp Act to the Declaration of

Independence, crowds in New Castle turned out to support and create the growing resistance movement. In 1765, stamps could not be unloaded across its docks for fear that they would be destroyed. When the local court decided to carry on its business without them, the merchant Edward Shippen Jr. reported that "the populace at New Castle have . . . obliged the justices to do business in the Common Pleas as usual." Town residents also opposed the Townshend Act in 1768 and sent aid to Boston after the Port Act of 1774. Although no manuscript records of the area's various revolutionary committees have survived, the historian Harold B. Hancock has pieced together a trail of evidence demonstrating that New Castle County was at the forefront of the Revolution in Delaware.⁵

The "Lower Counties on the Delaware" held an unusual and ambiguous status in the colonial period. While essentially an independent colony, Delaware operated under the loose supervision of the proprietary governor of Pennsylvania. As a result there were few recipients of British patronage in Delaware — and certainly none of prominence — to lead loyalist opposition against a whiggish General Assembly. The leading royal appointee in the colony was Theodore Maurice. As he explained in a petition to Parliament, he had held "the most considerable, and most lucrative Offices" in the government as registrar of probate, prothonotary of the common pleas court, and comptroller of customs. Together these yielded an annual salary of over £783, which, the Proprietor Richard Penn observed in his supporting testimony, was "fully adequate to a very Genteel Support . . . for a Gentleman to live upon."⁶ Indeed, Maurice appears in the wealthiest ten percent of those taxed in New Castle in 1776.⁷ However, during the war he realized that he could no longer hold such offices and, after turning over the seals of his office to the whig government, he peacefully departed for England in June, 1778.⁸

As the center of politics and commerce in colonial Delaware, New Castle had regular contact with Philadelphia just 30 miles upriver. As Philadelphia became the center for the emerging inter-colonial resistance, New Castle was pulled into the accelerating drive to separate from England. When commerce itself became politicized as the result of non-importation agreements, maritime laborers would play a crucial role. Even a conservative whig like John Dickinson adopted bold language in calling for local resistance to the arrival of newly taxed tea in 1773. He acknowledged that working men were key to the resistance when he observed,

I question, whether among the whole class of labourers that ply about the wharves, there will be found one, who would not rather go without his dinner than, for double wages, touch the accursed trash. Believe me, my friend, there is a spirit of Liberty and a Love of their Country

among every class of men among us . . . which show them worthy the character of free-born Americans.⁹

Dickinson confessed surprise to have taken a position where he “did not think politics would have reached,” but others were prepared to push much farther.

The Committee of Tarring and Feathering, for instance, warned the Delaware Pilots that “much is expected from those lads who meet with the Tea Ship . . . all agree, that Tar and Feathers will be his Potion, who pilots her into this harbour.” Ten days later, they repeated their threat, “hop[ing] that none of your body will behave so ill as to oblige us to clap him in the cart alongside of the [tea ship’s] captain.”¹⁰ Such widely cast threats certainly reached New Castle, the most important port on the river below Philadelphia. The resistance movement had been building for a decade and the repeated confrontation between British authority and local opposition pushed politics beyond its normal confines.¹¹

It was not until 1775, when the Second Continental Congress recommended that July 20 be observed as a fast day, that a clear revolutionary voice emerges directly from the town of New Castle. Following the Congressional instruction with the utmost gravity, Joseph Montgomery, the town’s Presbyterian pastor, preached a sermon to the local militia commanded by Samuel Patterson. Montgomery fused politics and religion in a lengthy discourse in which he explained that civil and biblical experience both demanded armed resistance. The ease with which Montgomery shifted from a political text, quoting the Congressional proclamation at length, to scripture suggests how a Calvinist religious tradition could readily support the popular movement toward revolution.¹²

The fusion of religion and politics in Montgomery’s sermon did not simply build on his personal opinion, but derived its effectiveness from resonating deeply with a community of listeners. The successful performance of a sermon required meeting the audience on common ground. That Montgomery’s sermon was delivered at least twice and was met by sufficient interest to be printed for broader circulation suggests that it provides an apt place for assessing popular opinion about the Revolution in New Castle.

Montgomery began by presenting the civil and political context of the day of fasting. He observed:

It must strike the most inattentive person with solemnity, when he considers that there is not, perhaps, less than two millions of intelligent Beings, this day, engaged in the same public acts of religious worship. I need not tell you that this grand assembly of the inhabitants of the continent, is by order of the Congress.¹³

Participation in a communal fasting ritual built local solidarity to resist the British, and reinforced the more abstract union of Americans throughout the colonies.

The heart of the sermon proclaimed the need for united action from the entire community. After reading from the long proclamation of the Continental Congress, Montgomery interjected, "My God, how important the day! . . . When the inhabitants of a whole country are forced, by a wanton exercise of arbitrary power, to fly to the *Lord God of Hosts*."¹⁴ As to how to act in these uncertain days, he offered a precise suggestion:

It is natural for a people labouring under public calamities by retrospect to consider whether ever there was a people in similar circumstances. . . . Happy for the possessors of the religion of Jesus Christ, in every difficult crisis they have not only the civil history of divers[e] nations, but they have the sacred volume to fly to, which abounds with instruction and clearly points out . . . their duty by example.¹⁵

The biblical exegesis which formed the body of the sermon examined the history of the Israelites from Abraham to Moses, closing with the injunction that they met with success because they kept the covenant with the Lord. In order to make the biblical text "suitable for our present solemnity," Montgomery allowed that "it may be necessary for us to take a short review of our political state . . . and then see, whether the words of my text wont apply to us, and whether I may not with propriety address you in the words of Moses."¹⁶ Montgomery acknowledged that the relationship between biblical experience and the present situation was not self-evident, it was precisely his role to mediate between the two.

Montgomery depicted the current crisis as ensuing from diverse causes most of which are familiar to historians of the Revolution. Among them he was especially clear in attacking the statutes of Parliament, "where we have not even ideal representation," for tearing down "our charters [which] are only like walls of paper, insufficient to screen us from Ministerial vengeance."¹⁷ Contrary to the main emphasis in recent historiography of the Revolution, however, a republican ideology emphasizing courtly corruption was not part of his exhortation.¹⁸ Indeed, Montgomery explicitly rejected such an interpretation. He charged those describing the resistance as "deeply tinged with republican principles" as enemies to the cause who caricatured the movement's true motives which had always "boasted in the name of Englishmen."¹⁹ No sooner had he invoked this conciliatory image and claimed to have "loved Great Britain, and gloried in her prosperity" than he staked a radical position by calling for separation from Britain well in advance of whig

elites. Montgomery declared in 1775 that "the fatal day . . . is come, when our connection with the parent state must be dissolved."²⁰

The central experience justifying separation lay in Americans' social development as a unique people. Montgomery argued that colonists had developed a sense of themselves as separate from Englishmen. Crucial to this divergence was contact with American Indians, who were "prevailed on to sell their right to the soil, or where . . . refractory [we]re conquered and obliged to make room for our ancestors." Since no "foreign aid appear[ed] to protect . . . [the colonists in] their infant state," a process of independent Americanization had begun whereby the colonists were a people apart from both natives and Europeans.²¹

Montgomery's sermon exposes a central quality of colonial society. He argued that New World settlement heightened colonists' consciousness of the range of human diversity, an awareness of differences felt more intensely in colonial America than in England. He used the experience of Indian contact as evidence of American unity. He insisted that this experience made all colonists alike, but here Montgomery is surely incorrect. By no means did colonists primarily identify themselves as Americans at any point in the colonial period; however, as they began to explain their resistance to imperial policies, their identity as a people made separate from Europeans through contact with American Indians loomed large. This powerfully symbolic pose in revolutionary New Castle had a more pragmatic application for colonists some hundred miles to the north at Easton.

The final element in Montgomery's call to action was to stress that his audience fulfill their social obligations as men. Given the political and biblical experience that he presented, failing to act would mean "submit[ing] our necks to the yoke." The alternative was to "stand up in our own defense, resolved to live free-men."²² He returned to this point most forcefully in his closing argument. Since "common sense, and the feelings of mankind, have long since reprobated the absurd doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance," he refused to comment on those weak alternatives. Rather it was time to

let resolution and courage inflame your bosoms—for if ever the dogs of war are let loose in our borders, and the glittering sword is unsheathed in our streets, then the eyes of our aged fathers, our ancient matrons, the eyes of our wives, our maidens and children, will all look up to you for protection.²³

He put the case starkly. Unless militiamen were prepared to deny their masculinity, they had to fight for their rights as free men. For Montgomery and his audience, the mainsprings of popular revolutionary ideology were found

in Christian experience, opposition to Indians, and a masculine code of behavior which left no alternative but to actively participate in the coming war as he did by becoming a brigade chaplain to the Delaware Regiment.²⁴

Montgomery effectively presented central themes in the revolutionary drive that helped mobilize men in New Castle and beyond to participate in the movement. But obviously his call hardly embraced all the sentiments of local people, even among those who counted themselves patriots. On the same day of fasting when the sermon was delivered, Alexander Porter, the wealthiest man in the area, was censured by the Committee of Inspection for working his slaves on the day of rest. Porter admitted that his actions were "apparently contrary" to the resolves of Congress, but, when judged "under the circumstances upon which they were acted," the "impartial public" would see that he did not oppose the movement "to free our countrymen in America from a compleat system of slavery." He asserted that "work of necessity" deserved dispensation from the day of rest. Although his slaves had already been cutting wheat sheaves for two weeks, "owing to the scarcity of men to be hired in harvest," his grain was becoming too ripe to let stand in the fields any longer. As a result, Porter needed to work his slaves so that the crop, "which had taken the greatest part of the year in raising," could be processed before it spoiled. More tellingly, however, Porter claimed to have worked his slaves because of "an apprehension prevailing in the neighborhood of the Negroes rising, and destroying the white people." By keeping them at work all day, he "prevent[ed] them running through the country, putting good people in fear" and also blocked their "opportunity of consulting about the ways and means of effecting it."²⁵

Porter strikingly juxtaposed two quite different understandings of slavery in his defense. While he explicitly feared that colonists might fall under a system of slavery, he had to act as a slave owner to prevent slave rebellion. Indeed, he explained that his duties as a slave master proved his status as a true patriot.²⁶ Like most other slaveholders in the mid-1770s, Porter saw no contradiction in the twofold manner that slavery shaped his world. He personally feared falling under a system of slavery and was committed to the cause of Independence, yet his reliance on slave labor required him to break patriot ranks.

Alexander Porter's fears about controlling his slaves during the Revolution were well founded. Slaves continually fled their masters when the opportunity presented itself. As William Adair recorded in his journal, revolutionary conditions provided slaves with a ready means for escaping bondage: "English Men of War [landed]—Negroes gone aboard."²⁷ The pattern Adair reported in the small port of Lewes in southernmost Delaware held true in New Castle as well. When the British presence provided the opportunity, slaves liberated themselves.²⁸

Samuel Patterson, the militia captain to whose men Montgomery had preached, was also among those unable to control his slaves during the Revolution. When James Booth prepared to visit New York City protected by a flag of truce in order to retrieve government documents seized by the British, Patterson granted him power of attorney to recover property which included a "Negro man named Richmond, formerly my Body Servant" as well as another black man, aged 60, named Port Royal.²⁹ The apparent intellectual and moral inconsistency of patriots fighting enslavement while holding slaves was not an impediment to revolutionary participation for leading patriots like Patterson and Porter. The Revolution politicized racial identity for both whites and blacks. White patriots fought to avoid slavery, while black refugees saw the potential for freedom in the social disruption it caused.

If Joseph Montgomery had been precocious in his call for separation from Britain in July, 1775, the patriot political establishment caught up with him the next year. The formal call for independence was, of course, a crucial turning point in the resistance movement, and one that leading Delaware political figures like John Dickinson and George Read, the most prominent New Castle politician of the era, initially opposed. These two friends and allies both served as delegates to the Second Continental Congress and both voted against the Declaration of Independence. Dickinson held his position steadfastly, while Read later added his name to the document when it was a *fait accompli*.³⁰ Unlike these cautious whig leaders, Montgomery proved far more astute in measuring local opinion.

As a county seat and the site of the colonial assembly, New Castle drew residents from all over the countryside to perform the rites of communal political life in the colony.³¹ One of the most dramatic of such gatherings occurred with the final separation of the colony from Britain. When the Declaration of Independence was publicly presented there on July 24, the leading patriot Thomas Rodney reported its being read to a crowd of between four and five hundred "who gave three Huzzas—and immediately tooke the King's arms" out of the courthouse and "burnt them with the Constable's Stave &c."³² Outright rebellion had begun: the symbols of colonial order, of local authority granted by the crown, were destroyed in a public bonfire to the cheering of a large crowd.

New Castle's leading role in the politics of the colony, however, was about to end. Although the state's constitutional convention would be held there, fear of British naval attack and desire for a more centrally located capital combined to force the decision to remove the state government to Dover. The vulnerability of New Castle and its residents to attack from the river remained a regular threat throughout the Revolution. Caesar Rodney reported being ". . . Constantly Alarmed in this Place by the Enemy." British control of Delaware Bay was so strong in 1778 that he added, ". . . Seldom a day passes

but Some man in this and the Neighboring Counties is taken off by these Villains." Needless to say, this had a damaging affect on potential patriots. Rodney claimed that many on the coast, "Who I know to be hearty in the cause, dare neither act nor Speak lest they should be taken away and their houses plundered."³³

The threat of raids came from both the British navy and loyalists like the former New Castle resident John Watson who with another man "fitted out at their joint expense an armed row Galley and Manned her with 20 Refugees." They used the galley for "... attacking some Rebel boats in the Delaware and taking prisoners ... [among] the most troublesome & inveterate Rebels of their Acquaintance."³⁴ Even as late as 1782 the town of New Castle suffered a raid by three refugee boats, who "a little after sunrise boldly boarded a shallop loaded with wheat that was lying at the wharf and took her out." They also attacked a schooner at anchor, but the townspeople, "roused by gunfire, stoutly resisted and finally drove them away. A lively fire of the enemy's four pounders poured into the city, though no one was hurt."³⁵

Despite patriot strength and the local revolutionary committees' leading role in Delaware's revolution, a notable pocket of loyalists lived in the town. The arrival of the British army and navy to the area in the fall of 1777 encouraged loyalist action. The heavy military presence — one Hessian soldier reported seeing 150 British ships anchored off New Castle in November, 1777 — opened numerous opportunities for profitable trade.³⁶ Unusually forceful in his opinion was Charles Bryson, a New Castle taxpayer, who admitted that same month that "he had dealt with the Enemy & would do it again and that he had taken Protection Under the Crown & would Defend it."³⁷ New Castle was a divided community in which individual allegiance could not be taken for granted.

Trading with the British was the most common offense that patriot courts charged against local people. Although decidedly less bold than Charles Bryson, Jacob Vandegrift admitted to having taken part in similar activity when he had "come on board one of the British vessels laying in the cove of New Castle and thare did deal with the crew on board and gave them a parcel of poultry and vegetables in satisfaction for a barrel of salt." In his appeal for pardon, Vandegrift explained that he engaged in trade "through fear of being distressed by ye English as they were often a Shore ... and threatened many that did not deal so I went and got a little salt as the rest of my neighbors did."³⁸

The British presence along the coast of Delaware certainly terrified local residents, particularly the growing numbers who rallied to the strong stance encouraged by leaders like Joseph Montgomery. When Ambrose Serle, Lord Admiral Howe's personal secretary, landed at New Castle in October 1777, he found the town "utterly abandoned by the Inhabitants on account of their Concern in the Rebellion." As in the case of Richard McWilliams, whom

Serle met briefly, he judged "most of the people in the neighborhood, of Ireland" to be participants in the rebellion and "tainted with its Principles." In contrast to the Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Serle viewed Methodists and Quakers as "generally loyal."³⁹

Ambrose Serle's perception of religious and ethnic division built upon his observations during several visits to New Castle. The following Sunday he heard a Methodist preacher give a loyalist sermon in the Anglican Immanuel Church, while under the protection of the British fleet in the harbor. Perhaps more than any other institution in the colonies, independence from Great Britain profoundly altered the terms under which the Anglican church operated. Most Anglican rectors closed up their churches entirely rather than perform the liturgy devoid of prayers for the King as required by the revolutionary government. However, the Anglican rector in New Castle, Aeneas Ross, could not force himself to halt services completely. When Serle attended Immanuel Church on Sunday, October 19, he observed,

an odd motley Service of religion. . . . The Parson, one Ross, read the Liturgy, garbled of the Prayers for the King and Royal Family; after w[hic]h, one of Mr. Wesley's Preachers mounted the Pulpit, and gave us a long & full Prayer for the King & a Blessing on his Arms, which, the author being evidently illiterate, was for the matter & manner curious enough. Strange that men S[houl]d be so ignorant of their own Ignorance, as to fancy themselves able to teach others what they do not understand themselves!⁴⁰

Thus, Aeneas Ross circumvented revolutionary law aimed to limit his ability to serve as an Anglican minister. Ross badly mumbled the prayers for the crown which were a standard part of the Anglican liturgy. Perhaps because of his long service as rector in the town, which began in 1758, Ross compromised to keep the church open throughout the Revolution.⁴¹ At least when the British navy was anchored offshore, it was even possible for itinerant Methodist ministers to preach openly in support of the King. Ross seems to have avoided such liberties for fear of risking reprisals. Whatever his attitude about the Revolution, Ross was one of a small number of Anglican ministers in the colonies who weathered the Revolution, continuing as rector until his death in 1782.

Gauging the allegiance of non-elites in the Revolution is a difficult task especially since the shifting balance of power dramatically affected individual opinion. One measure of how New Castle residents felt comes from a list compiled on June 24, 1777, when the New Castle militia Captain John Clark "caused the whole company to be summoned" to establish which of his men were prepared to march to defend neighboring Wilmington against the

advancing British army. He recorded the opinion of all sixty-four men in his company whose stances ranged from "ready to march,—made a wag'r" to "I'm damn'd if I'll march." Of the entire group, 42 percent were prepared to march, and 23 percent adamantly refused.⁴² Over half of these men can also be located in the New Castle tax list for 1776, allowing a measure of the relationship between social status, political allegiance, and willingness to serve. The most striking finding is that three-quarters of those who refused to march were local taxpayers. Eleven of the fifteen men who refused to march can be found on the tax list. Economic status, however, did not play a decisive role shaping willingness to fight. Of the six men assessed more than £10, two were ready to serve, and two refused (one who reported sick and another, who hired a substitute, occupied more ambiguous positions). The bottom rung of 12 men, assessed either £2 or £3, also were divided, although slightly more willing to march: seven were ready, four were opposed, and one was excused with a "family in distress."

One might have expected in a strongly patriot town that the entire militia would have consisted of patriots, but this was clearly not the case. Indeed, William Haslett, who said he would "never march," would be identified in the letter of a British spy as an ally willing "to point out some inveterate rebels if an officer would call at his house; [but] he is afraid to appear as they have threatened him."⁴³ Haslett learned not to express his political opinions publicly, for he had been brought into court earlier for referring "in a laughing matter" to the appointment of "the old miller" Samuel Patterson as a brigadier general in the militia.⁴⁴

Numerous examples of scattered loyalist activity around New Castle suggest that people there offered genuine resistance to the Revolution, but this evidence is often the product of the high level of patriot surveillance in the area. Openly loyal New Castle residents, like William Haslett, faced abuse for expressing opinions that would have been mild in the southern part of the state where armed loyalist bands rose to counter the rebellion. In New Castle, retribution came swiftly. For instance, John Watson reported to Parliament that "he made all the opposition he could to the Rebellion & was therefore mobbed and insulted by the People of the Town."⁴⁵ Unlike the loyalist elite Theodore Maurice, who reached a cordial agreement with patriot leaders and was allowed safe passage to England, middling men like Watson and the innkeeper John Drake, who joined the British army, found themselves and their families under attack. When Mrs. Drake and Mrs. Watson fled New Castle for a British vessel moored offshore, the militia fired a volley which struck Mrs. Drake who "received a wound from a Musket Ball in the back of her neck."⁴⁶ Even in the face of an armed and active British presence, the local militia showed itself willing to act boldly. Ambrose Serle, in fact, almost suffered capture during his wanderings around New Castle when "a Party, consisting

of 60 of the Rebel militia, who had secreted themselves in an adjacent Wood for a Day and a night" seized a number of seamen who had manned one of the transports that had brought him to shore.⁴⁷

The degree of patriot control as well as the significant loyalist presence in New Castle is evident in the "Act of Free Pardon and Oblivion" issued by the Delaware Assembly on June 26, 1778. In order "to mitigate [rather] than to increase the horrors of war," the Act allowed those who had abetted the British upon swearing an oath or an affirmation in support of the state to be "fully, freely and absolutely pardoned," though they would be barred from voting or holding civil or military office.⁴⁸ However, the actions of 46 persons in the state were deemed so offensive that they were excluded from the terms of the pardon. Twenty of these men were from New Castle County, with the highest incidence of loyalism in the small rural area surrounding and including the town of New Castle where 7 men were cast into oblivion. Of this group, only the druggist Dr. Watson appears in the New Castle tax list for 1776, while the laborer Christian Smith and the cordwainer Thomas Nodes were among those who refused to march with the militia in June, 1777.

The Revolution divided the residents of New Castle, but more significantly the war disrupted how local people understood one another. Religious difference, reinforced by political and ethnic identity, clearly marked local divisions. Presbyterians tended to be patriots, while Anglicans (along with Methodists who had not yet separated from the Church of England) were more likely to be loyalists. The ministers in New Castle followed this basic division: the Presbyterian Joseph Montgomery preached in favor of rebellion, while the Anglican church was the site of loyalist sermons.

The merger of religious and political identification continued in the wake of the Revolution according to the one extant account of post-war political culture in Delaware. James Tilton, the pseudonymous "Timoleon," levied a sharp attack against the conservative whig George Read, whom he dubbed "the tyrant of Delaware." Tilton published his pamphlet in 1788 out of fear that the pre-revolutionary Anglican elite were reasserting their authority and assaulting gains made by Presbyterians, who were "more generally revolutionists" than any other "denomination." Tilton charged leaders like Read with relying upon "the cultivation of religious prejudice as the main anchor of hope" for conservative political success. "A new and extraordinary cry was therefore raised against Presbyterians," as counter-revolutionary gentlemen "counsel[ed] their weaker brethren, to be guarded against the violence of Presbyterians," and "ignorant pimps and bullies" were stirred up to "roar out in the streets against *Presbyterians* and *Calvinists*." Although such behavior was less likely to occur in New Castle County, where Presbyterians had their strongest presence in the state, Tilton offered a scandalous example of a conservative judge on election day who "flourish[ed] his walking stick [and] denominat[ed] it John

Wesley's staff, with which he intended to break Jack Calvin's head." Tilton charged that former members of the Church of England, Episcopalians and Methodists, furthered their anti-revolutionary program by linking "the violence of republicanism, and the danger of presbyterianism." Because conservatives had lost the central political contest that led to Independence, he charged them with shifting their tactics by cultivating "religious prejudices . . . with redoubled energy, as the main spring of action."⁴⁹

Tilton's attack overflows with anger which often muddled his argument. In seizing on the importance of religious identity for late eighteenth century Delaware political and social life, he clearly hoped to mobilize popular support around awareness of this sensitive issue. Tilton provides the most outspoken expression of the radical Presbyterian and conservative Anglican split in revolutionary Delaware, but it was no isolated opinion. At the very start of the war, the leading radical Thomas McKean argued a similar point when he opposed a law barring ministers from public office at the state constitutional convention. He felt the law specifically targeted his former Presbyterian pastor in New Castle, Joseph Montgomery.⁵⁰

Religion was just one form of personal and group identity politicized during the Revolution. The most thoroughgoing change it wrought in the Delaware Valley was in the heightened awareness of the centrality of diversity to the fabric of everyday life. The most stunning example of the intensification of identities in the period occurred around race. Both for whites and African-American slaves fleeing bondage at the hands of patriots, the Revolution laid bare a fundamental contradiction between the ideals and reality of the movement. The Revolution created a sharper sense of differences even among whites of different religious groups in New Castle. To create a stable post-colonial society the kind of violent fervor separating Presbyterians and Anglicans that Tilton described would have to be overcome. The conservative project of creating an American mainstream in the region in the next 50 years could succeed only by cooling local passions that were central to the Revolution.

Religion played possibly an even larger part structuring the revolutionary experience in Burlington, New Jersey. Religious identity along with ethnicity, local political traditions, social status, and the occupation of the town by British and Hessian troops combined to make it a loyalist stronghold. Simply because it was the capital of West Jersey, Burlington was a focal point for royal patronage and had more direct ties to England than either New Castle or Easton. Only Burlington boasted leading loyalists like the Governor William Franklin and the political satirist and Anglican priest Jonathan Odell.

The disruption of local life in Burlington led Margaret Morris, a Quaker widow, to record her experiences in a journal written for her married sister in

Pennsylvania. Her narrative offers a rich view of local divisions caused by the struggle. It also reveals a significant personal transformation that she experienced during the war, and permits a gendered assessment of how men and women experienced the Revolution differently. Morris lived in a large house, previously owned by Governor Franklin, located among the handsome riverside residences on "Green Bank" just below the town center. In early December, 1776, as British forces marched across New Jersey and were rumored to be sailing up the Delaware, town residents fled to the countryside which, Morris noted, made "our little bank look lonesome."⁵¹ Morris remained in town with her sister, "the beloved companion of my widowed estate," Sarah Dillwyn, who lived with Morris during the frequent absences of her husband, the Quaker traveling minister George Dillwyn.⁵²

Morris noted myriad visitations by advancing and retreating troops of both sides. Whereas the skirmishes she recorded do not figure prominently in military assessments of the war, her journal reveals the local impact of war in rich detail.⁵³ The varied military forces that townspeople faced made negotiation and self-presentation crucial. At ten o'clock in the morning on December 11, the first group of non-local fighting men, a party of 60 patriots from Pennsylvania, arrived in Burlington. As they passed through, they warned of the impending arrival of Hessian troops. The riflemen then crossed the Delaware River to Bristol on the opposite bank, where they made their defense.⁵⁴

As the riflemen were still crossing the river, a trip that could hardly take more than 30 minutes, word reached town that some four or five hundred Hessians were already at the bridge over Assiscunk Creek, the northern boundary of town settlement. Jonathan Lawrence and two or three other leading men went to meet with the troops to ensure "the safety of the town." First, however, they sent word to Captain Moore, who commanded the patriot galley ships patrolling the river, to explain their pacific purpose. Moore agreed that town leaders should meet with the Hessians and attempt to avoid being plundered. When Moore's approval arrived, Lawrence engaged in stilted negotiations since neither the town nor the troops could supply a bilingual translator. Nevertheless, they determined that the soldiers would halt their advance on Broad Street before reaching the town center. Word of the peaceable agreement was sent back to Moore on the river, and he agreed that a fair truce had been made. Since Burlington would not be attacked, he sailed down river to confirm the accord with Commodore Seymour who headed the patriot river forces.⁵⁵ Lawrence invited the Hessian commandant and his officers to his house for a meal, and included Jonathan Odell whose French speaking ability proved useful in sealing the accord with the invading force. Fortright negotiation had apparently saved the town from attack despite the opposing troops at close quarters and Burlington's location at the heart of a contested landscape.

Meanwhile, however, Commodore Seymour had received word of the Hessian advance on Burlington and had sent several boats upriver. They were to fire on any group of men assembled in the town who were expected to be Hessians or loyalists. Unsuspectingly, Lawrence and two others went down to the wharf to greet them, thinking that they were Moore's returning boats. The trio waved their hats, the agreed upon sign that the galleys were to come ashore peaceably, but instead were fired upon. As Morris commented, the two sides behaved quite differently. Where the Hessian commandant had the "appearance, at least, of generosity and humanity," the cannonading by patriot galleys, which lasted well into the night, was "a cruel as well as unprovoked piece of treachery."

The varied land and water troops that passed through, lodged, and fired upon Burlington on December 11 marked the start of a seven-month period during which Hessian and British troops, Jersey and Pennsylvania militia, and naval forces on both sides harried town residents. For instance, just two weeks later more than 1500 Pennsylvania militia crossed the river from Bristol and were quartered in Burlington. As was the case in New Castle, raids from the river provoked Margaret Morris' greatest fears. Patriots in galley boats frequently made swift landings, destroyed property, and even carried off local men suspected of being tories.⁵⁶ When the British finally gained control of the river in summer 1777, Morris commented with relief, "I really think they have made an end of the gondolas; I hope never to see another."⁵⁷

Located on the fragile margin of war, the ability to recognize different armed forces and to distinguish the allegiance of non-combatants became crucial in Burlington. As the galley men later explained, they fired on the three local men waving their hats from the wharf because, "they took it for granted it was at Hessians they fired."⁵⁸ When a number of patriot troops landed on the bank near her house, Morris shrewdly took advantage of such confusion during what amounted to a civil war. When the troops demanded that she help them find a "d[amme]d tory" who had been spying on them, she feigned that "[t]he name of a tory, so near *my own door*, seriously alarmed me," even though she secretly harbored the loyalist Jonathan Odell in her house. To give her "refugee" time to conceal himself "like a thief in an auger hole," as they had prearranged, she carried on a clever game of deception to slow the patriot search.

when I thought he had crept into the hole, I put on a very simple look, and cried out,

"Bless me, I hope you are not Hessians."

"Do we look like Hessians," asked one of them rudely.

"Indeed I don't know."

"Did you never see a Hessian?"

"No, never in my life; but they are *men*, and you are men, and may be Hessians, for anything I know"⁵⁹

By playing dumb with a simple look, and through highlighting her female identity in contrast to the male troops, who therefore might be Hessians for all she knew, Morris stalled for time. In this encounter she manipulated the uncertainty of individual allegiance so successfully that the troops chose not to search the interior of her house.

Morris' support of the crown clearly emerges from her journal. Commenting on setbacks to the patriot cause, she noted: "so far so good"; British advances were celebrated as "more news, great news! very great news!"⁶⁰ Morris not only cheered British victory, but invoked satanic designs to explain patriot behavior. To her, the very "spirit of the devil . . . rove through the town in the shape of tory-hunters." Similarly, when Pennsylvania militia were "quartered on the inhabitants" of Burlington after a successful battle, she countered their boasting by speculating that such easy victories came as part of a divine plan that would soon lead them "to meet the chastisement . . . reserved for them."⁶¹

For all her anti-patriot sentiment, however, Morris consistently identified local soldiers as *our* men, even when they opposed British troops. She recorded in the diary that "our men have gained another victory . . . the English are fleeing before them."⁶² Local sensibilities and friendships held sway even as the war threatened to rip them apart. Morris' neighbor Colonel Cox served in the Jersey militia, but still trusted her with the keys to his house. Acting the part of the cordial neighbor, she handed them over to Pennsylvania militia men on December 28 when they "civilly asked for the keys" and prepared to pass the night in Cox's house.⁶³ But Morris went even further in hosting the guests of her absent neighbor. The militia man William Young recorded in his own journal the next day that "the good woman next door sent us two mince pies last night, which I took very kind. May God bless all our friends and benefactors."⁶⁴

Morris' sense that patriot militia were still *our* men was certainly heightened by the fact that the most active British forces around Burlington were Hessians. Though these German-speaking troops initially established contact with the town on good terms, poor relations were soon exacerbated by linguistic and cultural distance. No town leaders spoke German, and when not using French as an intermediary language, they were forced to rely on a "Dutch" servant girl "that can speak for us." Nevertheless, in instructing her children to pronounce "'vegates,' [wie ghets] (how do you do?) like a Dutchman," Morris prepared her children for a period characterized by regular contact with the German soldiers.⁶⁵

When Washington's surprise crossing of the Delaware routed the Hessians just to the north of Burlington at Trenton, Morris blamed the reversal on the Germans' heavy drinking in celebration of Christmas. The Hessian troops quartered in the area burdened townspeople. For instance, several Hessians had come to town on Christmas Eve and were not only "observed to be in liquor in the street," but then "went to the tavern, and calling for rum ordered the man to charge it to the King." Morris was scandalized by such behavior and commented, "how unlike Christians is the manner in which they celebrate" the birth of Christ.⁶⁶

Though she was loyal to the crown and opposed to the Revolution, it would be inaccurate to characterize Morris primarily as a loyalist. Like most members of the Society of Friends, she attempted to be a genuine neutral. Although Quaker experience in the Revolution was not monolithic, they generally opposed the war as required by the decision of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. As the resistance movement gathered speed in early 1775, the Yearly Meeting adopted a sharp position against the rebels, whose actions "we now find have increased contention, and produced great discord and confusion." It did not equivocate at all in "publicly . . . declare[ing] against every usurpation of power and authority, in opposition to the laws and government, and against all combinations, insurrections, conspiracies, and illegal assemblies."⁶⁷ Even after the war had begun, Quaker leadership remained steadfast in its commitment to the peace testimony. Just as Morris began her journal in December, 1776, the Meeting for Sufferings for Pennsylvania and New Jersey announced the resolves of the Society to resist the war effort: "Let not the fear of suffering, either in person or property, prevail on any to join with or promote any work or preparation for war. Our profession and principles are founded on that Spirit which is contrary to, and will in time put an end to all wars."⁶⁸

Especially as the patriot prospects dimmed with the British military advance across New Jersey, the state revolutionary government there, and in Pennsylvania, adopted Test Acts which required all men of legal age to swear an oath of allegiance. The enforcement of such oaths intensified revolutionary conflict as the war now directly touched the lives of ordinary people. The radicalizing force of such requirements only further alienated members of the Society of Friends, whose commitment to pacifism and rejection of sworn oaths both kept them outside the main revolutionary coalition.

Since formal political and martial responsibilities only embraced men, Quaker women like Margaret Morris discovered that gender facilitated their ability to maintain the peace testimony and neutrality during the Revolution. In one of the most extemporaneous portions of the diary, we can see how her hopes for neutrality and her sense of self as a woman were closely linked. Morris reported:

A great deal of talk in the neighborhood about a neutral island; wish with great earnestness it may be allowed—wonder the men in town don't think it worth while to step down here and tell us what they are after—get quite in the fidgets for news.⁶⁹

The manner in which her discussion of neutrality was followed by comments about decision making by men is suggestive. The mental process indicated by the development of her comments from hopes for neutrality to anxiety about waiting for news of men's actions exposes some of the restraints on women's ability to participate in the Revolution.

Morris' experience of the war was somewhat different than that of John Hunt, another Quaker journal writer, who lived in Evesham Township, just north of Burlington and in the same Monthly Meeting. His journal demonstrates that men faced greater officially-sanctioned punishments than women in the war. His entries in late January, 1777 are all explicitly concerned with the jailing and impressment of Quaker men. For instance, he recorded that "people were afraid of taking the great Roads because of the Soldiers." Further, six male neighbors had been "put in Burlington jail because they would not sign or associate with [the rebels]. Some others did sign and so were sent home . . . This was a very sore trying time."⁷⁰ Hunt was centrally concerned with the political repression born of the Revolution, which identified only men as competent actors.

Not all Quakers maintained the discipline of the Society by remaining neutrals throughout the conflict. As Hunt noted, the resolve of some local Quaker men broke under coercive threats and others surely cast aside impartiality by joining one side or the other. The goal of maintaining unity within the Society led to disciplinary proceedings against those suspected of failing to keep Quaker principles. Two cases from the Burlington Monthly Meeting, demonstrates how individual Quakers responded to the Revolution in different ways and that the Monthly Meeting treated their behavior with some flexibility. For instance, Thomas Rogers was permitted back into the Society despite swearing an oath to the revolutionary government, owning a gun, hiring a man to serve in his place in the patriot army, and accepting compensation for an apprentice who enlisted. Although Rogers had done all but actually enlist himself, he was able to remain a member of the Society when he later was judged to have earnestly requested readmission. But Rogers was an exception as only 5 out of 40 men brought up for disownment were allowed to return. One of the majority that left the Society was Langston Carlisle who had "assented to learn the art of war" and became a captain of the first regiment of Burlington County.⁷¹

Unlike Quaker men, Margaret Morris could carry on as a genuine neutral during the war. She gave care to those in need, dispensing aid regardless of the

sufferers' allegiance in the conflict. Her catholic behavior was tolerated because of expectations about women's roles. While women's social latitude is often viewed as narrowly circumscribed in early America, neutrality in war permitted women greater room to act than men. Men could not be universal caregivers nor act as true neutrals without transgressing the bounds of masculine behavior. In patriot eyes especially, male neutrality was either a sign of weakness and femininity or the mark of a traitor.

Morris' sense of herself as a Quaker caregiver made her particularly appalled at the impoverishment and the loss of life caused by the war. While nursing wounded and sickly soldiers, she commented, "my heart melted to see such a number of my fellow creatures, lying like swine on the floor . . . many of them without even a blanket to cover them."⁷² War dehumanized people, and, like other members of the Society of Friends who remained true to the pacifistic tenets of their faith, Morris was especially attuned to the suffering it caused. Unlike most male Quakers, however, she found ways to support individuals on both sides, healing injured patriots and hiding loyalist refugees.

Because war was a fundamentally gendered event, it influenced men and women in different ways. The social disruption of the Revolution began a transformation in gender relations which was central to the alteration of interlocking identities in the war and its aftermath. While a large secondary literature has identified a major transition in gender relations in the revolutionary era, the focus here on particular places emphasizes the importance of social experience itself as a source of that change and insists that analysis of gendered identity needs to be understood in the context of other social relationships.⁷³

Morris' journal concludes with several scenes where she profits from having acted as a compassionate and nonpartisan dispenser of charity. After she healed several galley men and their wives of "itch fever," one of them returned and offered to guide her across British lines into patriot-controlled Philadelphia. Morris recognized that the balance of power in the region was shifting and that a journey across lines would be dangerous. But "such an offer was not to be slighted." With the rebel escort and Ann Odell, the wife of the rector, she planned to set off the next day with a borrowed horse and chair. The journey to Philadelphia went smoothly, and the visit was enjoyable, although "reports of the great scarcity of provisions in town, and a thousand other things combined to make it an awfully affecting meeting" with her friends and family.⁷⁴

Morris' return, however, was more arduous, since the guide failed to reappear to escort them home. Troubled by accounts of skirmishes, armed parties rounding up everyone they found, and even a rumor that "women had been into town and brought out goods," they decided to head for home on their own and "whipped and cut our dull horse at a strange rate." The first leg

of the journey was the most treacherous, for Morris knew that once she and Ann Odell reached the ferry at Bristol, "we [would be] so well known, [that] we should meet no more dangers." However, as they drove their horse relentlessly up a hill, its harness broke, forcing the riders to jump to safety as they began to roll backwards. Eventually they fixed the broken part with the help of a neighbor who used their ribbons and garters for the repair. When they returned home, their friends in Burlington were amazed by their tale.⁷⁵

The upshot of the journey and the group's reception indicates that the revolutionary experience was an empowering one for Morris. As they recounted their adventure over "a good dish of tea," the women were told never again to attempt "such a perilous undertaking." Morris retorted, in the final line of the journal, that she would not hesitate to set out again, but would

look out for a stronger horse and chair, and be our own guide, for that our late expedition, so far from being a discouragement, was like a whet to an hungry man, which gave him a better appetite for his dinner.⁷⁶

The narrative impact of this final line emphasizes the transformation wrought by the unusual events of the Revolution. Whether the journal is understood as a transcript of actual events or seen as a carefully crafted literary work, her message of personal growth in a time of adversity is central.

The wholesale change in Morris' sense of herself as a single woman appears strikingly in comparing her self-descriptions at the beginning and end of the journal. It opened in a desperate tone with her "quite sick; [and] ready to faint" at the thought of facing the war without a husband. She described herself as "one forsaken" whose "tranquillity was restored" only through the consolation afforded by "acquiescence to the Divine will."⁷⁷ By the end of the journal, Divine providence was no less central, but she now asserted herself more boldly. Part of this transformation developed out of her experience of the advantages gained by heading a female household. She was exempt from the burden of quartering troops because "we rank ourselves among the [feeble and defenseless], having no man with us in the house."⁷⁸ While one might stress the negative imagery and the centrality of female dependence in such self-presentation, Morris also exploited the image of the defenseless widow with children to good advantage. By the end of the journal, when she presented herself as her own best guide, Morris transcended the prescribed behavior expected of a single woman. Indeed, by not remarrying after the death of her husband in 1766 even unto her own death in 1816 Morris clearly valued the autonomy of being unmarried more than she feared the consequences of being without a husband.

While the Revolution disrupted life in extraordinary ways, it also created new possibilities for action, perhaps especially for elite women like Morris from whom no participation in a military band or explicit political allegiance could be demanded. Morris was certainly conscious of the advantages that this period of reversal granted. Once the Anglican rector Jonathan Odell had fled the windowless hiding spot in her house for the safety of a position as an adviser to the British army, she relished the memory of his temporary debasement and dependence on her. Confident that the British would win the war, Morris expected that Odell would soon return to his leading role in the town and in all likelihood become the first Anglican bishop in America when a see became established in the colonies. Thus Morris mused that she now had something to hold over the head of her "refugee." She commented cheekily, but perhaps with some bitterness as well, I "suppose [after the war] he will then think himself too *big* to creep into his old auger hole — but I shall remind him of the place, if I live to see him created first B[isho]p of B[urlingto]n."⁷⁹

Jonathan Odell, the person who appears most regularly in Morris' informative account, provides an excellent counterpoint to her experience. Odell had been the Anglican rector of St. Mary's parish in Burlington from 1767 until he fled from rebel harassment for protection behind British lines in January 1777. Although the two friends held similar political views, each offered different perspectives on the Revolution in Burlington that were most fundamentally shaped by social perspectives accompanying their gender.

That a Quaker woman and an Anglican minister would find themselves on friendly terms is not surprising, given the social landscape of Burlington. When Odell, a native of East Jersey, arrived in Burlington in 1767 fresh from ordination in London, he found the close association of Anglicans and Quakers worth noting. In a report to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (hereafter SPG), he observed that "Quakers . . . in this Country, [were] of all Dissenters the most friendly to those of our Communion."⁸⁰ The cordial relationship was also essential for the outnumbered Anglican minority of Burlington in the late 1760s.⁸¹ Under Odell's leadership, St. Mary's prospered as he spearheaded a rebuilding project, and the congregation doubled in size. By 1775 a fellow SPG missionary in Elizabethtown commented that the church in New Jersey has "of late become very respectable" and noted that the church at Burlington had a "handsome appearance."⁸²

Odell undoubtedly enjoyed his position and status in pre-revolutionary Burlington. His congregation was growing, and he was well paid. His salary, combined with rents received from church land, made him a middling taxpayer in the town. Additionally his close relationship with Governor William Franklin, who acted as a personal patron, gave Odell a part in the leading life

of the colony. All was far from comfortable, however, as the rancor of rebels hoping to sever ties with Britain increased during his ministry.

Odell's first explicit conflict with the rebels occurred in 1775 when the Committee of Inspection in Philadelphia seized two letters he had written which were critical of the whig Congress and forwarded them to the revolutionary government of New Jersey. It declined to issue a public censure, since "this Congress would by no means violate the right of private sentiment, and . . . Mr. Odell's letter does not clearly appear to have been intended to influence public measures."⁸³ For the time being Odell was treated according to ordinary social dictates which acknowledged a significant distinction between private sentiment and public language. In 1775, he could still maintain private opposition to the resistance movement without suffering punishment.

As the Revolution intensified, however, Odell came under increasing supervision. By June, 1776, Governor Franklin had been arrested, and Odell, with his pregnant wife and two small children, fled the Delaware Valley for Shrewsbury in East Jersey, under firmer British protection from New York. Captured on the way by rebels who declared him "a person suspected of being inimical to American liberty," he was confined to an eight mile circle from the Court House in Burlington.⁸⁴ Parole in Burlington hardly calmed his opposition to rebellion. With Franklin no longer in office and attempting to win over moderates from a radical course, Odell began to publish poems that openly criticized the rebels and chastised loyalists for not being more forthright in their support.

As British and Hessian troops swept across New Jersey in December, 1776, Odell's confidence rose. He composed a poem censuring the misguided rebels, which called for an end to the independence movement,

A truce then to all whig and tory debate;
True Lovers of Freedom, contention we hate;
For the Demon of discord in vain tries his art
To inflame or possess a true *Protestant* heart.

True Protestant friends to fair Liberty's cause,
To decorum, good order, religion, and laws,
From avarice, jealousy, perfidy, flee;
We wish all the world were as happy as we.

While thousands around us, misled by a few,
The Phantom of pride and ambition pursue,
With pity their fatal delusion we see;
And wish all the world were as happy as we!⁸⁵

When it became clear that there would be no easy victory for the British, Odell realized that he could no longer remain in Burlington without suffering a fate like that of the imprisoned Franklin. Leaving his family, he fled for safety to British-controlled New York.

Shocked that he had been forced to abandon his rectorship of ten years, Odell decried the rebels' failure to respect the distinction between private and public behavior made by the New Jersey Provincial Congress in 1775. Writing to the SPG shortly after arriving in New York, he observed:

I had made it a rule to myself from the beginning of our troubles, not to interfere directly or indirectly in Public Affairs, and tho' I neither could nor would make any sacrifice of my principles or duty, either as a Loyal Subject or a Minister of the Church of England, yet my political conduct should be inoffensive, if they would allow a passive conduct to be so But this specific system did not screen me in particular from much jealousy and misrepresentation.⁸⁶

Of course, claiming to have maintained silence about public affairs was somewhat disingenuous coming from the author of vitriolic poems. By refusing to alter his political or religious principles in a time of revolutionary change, Odell was drawn into the public eye.

Ultimately, a man of status like Jonathan Odell could not withdraw from public life without completely altering his daily behavior. As Morris' journal testified, Odell was a town leader who negotiated with outsiders as one of its spokesmen. Most importantly, however, Odell's responsibilities as an Anglican priest prevented him from leading a narrowly private life. After the formal separation of the colonies from Britain, he could not carry out his regular religious duties without declaring a political position. His everyday life had become explicitly politicized. As he explained: "Since the declaration of Independency the alternative has been either to make such alteration in the Liturgy as both honor and conscience must be alarmed at, or else to shut up our churches, and discontinue our attendance at public worship." Odell did not "hesitate a moment," and, like most Anglican clerics in the colonies, he elected "to suspend . . . public Ministrations rather than make any alteration."⁸⁷ The politicization of everyday life constrained Jonathan Odell to a much greater extent than it did Margaret Morris. While their political leanings were similar, he could no longer function as a leading man in his community. To have truly limited himself to passive conduct would have meant severely altering his status, even requiring that he act in an unmanly fashion, which the loyalist satirist was not prepared to do.

The liberation achieved by Margaret Morris during the Revolution was limited in many respects, and her own transformation was by no means shared

by all women in the period. The Revolution also brought devastating consequences to women whose sexual vulnerability increased under conditions of war.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Morris' journal powerfully describes a period of accelerated social transformation. Morris' elite status, Quaker religion, and widowed autonomy combined to reshape her sense of self during the Revolution. The intersection of these identities highlights that revolutionary ideology itself only partially explains changes wrought by the Revolution.

The most sweeping social reforms proposed in these towns did not flow from the republican ideology of elite patriots, but are found in the ideals and actions of a non-patriot, the Quaker neutral John Hunt. Beginning in the mid-1770s, Hunt served on committees to encourage slave manumissions by visiting slaveholding Quakers to encourage them to free their bondsmen. While he often complained of "tite work," other times he celebrated "great encouragement beyond expectation."⁸⁹ More tellingly, he linked the upsurge in reform activity to the war years. He reported that the Yearly Meeting which met during the British occupation of Philadelphia in September, 1777, was characterized by "a most precious favoured quiet." At the meeting a "Concern of Reformation took its Rise . . . & was very lively Several years but all Dies away as soon as peace is Proclaimed."⁹⁰ Hunt's reforming concerns embraced not just enslaved African Americans but also temperance, penal practice, education, and American Indian poverty. As we will see with the revolutionary experience in Easton in the next section, concern with ameliorating the condition of Indians was far from a patriotic concern.

Lest such diverse reform interests be misinterpreted as utterly utopian and unrealistic in the revolutionary era, it is worthwhile to return to Margaret Morris and the political gains of white women of property in New Jersey. The state constitution of 1776 granted the right to vote to any person assessed with wealth above £50. For the first time, certain women were acknowledged to possess the necessary independence to participate in elections as autonomous individuals who could elect political representatives. Such an opening was not merely caused by sloppy language, for an electoral reform law in 1790 clarified women's right to vote by stating explicitly that "he or she" worth that sum could vote, a legal right that was preserved until 1807.⁹¹ Whereas the revolutionary crisis provided a time of opportunity for elite women like Morris, it led to Odell's confinement and forced him to flee from his own congregation. After the Revolution he continued to serve as a leader in the British colonial world as a government official in New Brunswick where he died in 1818, never having returned to Burlington.

Residents of Burlington and New Castle mostly measured themselves against the British in their experience and understanding of the Revolutionary

War. These colonial capitals on the coastal plain were ports in the Atlantic maritime world, and by the late eighteenth century no longer confronted Indians on a regular basis. Patriot galleys, British naval ships, or loyalist boats made their raids upon New Castle and Burlington from the river. But farther up the Delaware River, residents in the piedmont town of Easton were still actively engaged with Indians and land settlement. The Revolution politicized local identities in Easton as it did in the other towns, but the backcountry war against the Indians provided the major impetus for local people to unite in the Revolution.

While the Scots-Irish in New Castle were among the most active revolutionaries there, this pattern was not repeated in Easton. The correlation of ethno-religious identity with political allegiance grows out of daily life and local social context and not from a biologically determined orientation to the world or a fixed philosophical outlook. The Scots and Scots-Irish in colonial Northampton County and its seat at Easton were often political elites, rather than the relative outsiders that they were in pre-revolutionary New Castle. Officeholders in Easton were placed by the Proprietary Party and tended to be Scots-Irish, while Germans generally sided with the Quaker Party who traditionally controlled the Assembly.⁹² Before Independence the Scots-Irish held most leading political and legal positions in the German-dominated area around Easton. As a result their commitment to the Revolution was less wholehearted there than in places like New Castle where Anglicans were the main beneficiaries of the colonial order.

Lewis Gordon provides the best example of an elite Scot in Easton during the Revolution. A charter member of the St. Andrew's Society, a Scottish immigration association founded in Philadelphia in 1749, Gordon clearly understood ethnicity to be central to his sense of self.⁹³ Nevertheless, he was active in leading English social circles and married in Philadelphia's Anglican Christ Church. The surest sign of his elite standing was his position as a Justice of the Peace in Northampton County, an office granted by proprietary patronage.⁹⁴ Gordon was an anglicized Scot who enjoyed privileges bestowed by colonial authorities.

Two surviving grand jury instructions that Gordon delivered at the Easton courthouse in June, 1775, reveal the importance of Englishness to his conception of the legal process and the maintenance of social order. One began by explaining to the jury that "amongst all the various and different forms and models of Laws and Constitutions which have obtained amongst mankind, none exceeds or affords greater blessings than those of the English." The second jury instruction also framed courts and law as fundamentally Anglo:

The Liberty which English subjects claim as their indefensible inheritance and Birth-right is not such a freedom from all restraint . .

. as would leave every man his own avenger For nothing is more consistent than Law and Liberty; nay there cannot be political Liberty without Law.⁹⁵

Such an understanding of the Englishness of law in the colonies was widespread, but in the context of a predominantly German local population, his views sparked considerable local resentment.⁹⁶ As early in Easton's settlement as 1758, ethnic identity had undergirded assumptions about the operation of the legal system. When the justices attempted to block the appeal of Nathaniel Vernon on a technicality, he was quick to insist, "[although] I am not a lawyer; I am an Englishman and think myself intitled to the Benefit of the Law."⁹⁷ His outburst may well have stemmed from not wanting to be treated like a German colonist who would have been less comfortable in an English-speaking court.⁹⁸

Germans certainly participated in the colonial court at Easton as plaintiffs, defendants, and jurors in the eighteenth century, but they rarely occupied the most powerful positions of magistrates or attorneys.⁹⁹ Most lawyers at the Northampton County courthouse in the eighteenth century were sojourners from Philadelphia. According to the nineteenth-century historian Matthew Henry, only three Easton residents, all of them culturally Anglo, were admitted to the bar before 1800: Lewis Gordon, Robert Traill, and Samuel Sitgreaves (who moved to Easton from Philadelphia in 1786).¹⁰⁰

A magistrate with the frame of mind suggested by Lewis Gordon's grand jury instructions faced wrenching decisions during the Revolution. In the early days of the struggle, Gordon remained a prominent leader, serving as clerk and chair of the key local revolutionary institution, the Committee of Observation and Inspection. Under his leadership, it fell into considerable controversy, much of it aimed squarely at him. Thomas Wigdon, for instance, swore against the Committee and its members, "as being Tories and disaffected to the Common Cause of American Liberty." His insults were even more pointed when he "openly and publickly called the said Chairman [Gordon] a Scotch Bugger."¹⁰¹ Wigdon clearly fused his perception of the Tory leanings of the Committee with its leadership by a Scotsman.

By December, 1776, in the same period of British military success that Margaret Morris recorded in her Burlington journal, Gordon resigned from the Committee. As Wigdon's insults made plain, Gordon was too cautious a leader for some, and it seems likely that as the war appeared to turn decisively against the rebels, he decided to distance himself from the movement even though it meant withdrawing from local leadership. Tellingly, Gordon was replaced on the committee by Abraham Berlin, a vestryman in the Lutheran Church. The Revolution in Easton broadened positions of authority to include more German Americans than under colonial rule.

A month after Gordon resigned, the Committee of Safety in Philadelphia ordered his arrest as a suspected Tory and directed the Committee at Easton to seize his ferry and run it "solely under [their own] control and direction."¹⁰² Nevertheless, Gordon remained a figure of local prominence whose actions proved vexing to Robert Levers, a leading appointed patriot official. Gordon repeatedly appeared at the center of Levers' concerns. For instance, the whig official reported in October, 1777, that imprisoned troops and loyalists at Easton "were always possessed of the earliest and best Intelligence . . . [due to] their intimate connection with Lewis Gordon, Esquire, with whom several of them lodged." He added that Gordon's two sons traveled regularly between Easton and Philadelphia, reportedly to visit their sister in the city, but more likely, in his view, to carry information to the British. Levers hoped to control such movement because it exposed the vulnerable town to potential attack, made all the more threatening since Gordon still operated his ferry. Levers explained to the Council:

The possession of the Ferry at Easton at this important moment is a matter of the greatest Trust; Persons of all characters are passing & repassing both at Delaware and Lehigh, and as the ferriage is constantly paid to Mr. Gordon or some of his family, it affords an opportunity of conveying and insinuating backwards and forwards . . . Intelligence and dislike to the American cause.¹⁰³

Nearly a year had passed since the Philadelphia leaders of the Revolution had ordered that Gordon's proprietary privilege as a ferry operator be terminated, and in spite of Levers' efforts, he continued in business as before.

Gordon evaded whig aims to punish him for failing to support their cause by leasing his boat and the right to operate the ferry to Peter Ealer, the county jailer, and Jacob Abel, a tavernkeeper. Gordon relied on local contacts that persisted regardless of patriot-loyalist polarization in the widening revolutionary movement. Levers' avenue for action was limited since Abel and Ealer had both conformed to the demands of revolutionary law by having sworn an oath of allegiance to the new government. As Levers complained to state authorities governing from Lancaster, themselves weakened by having abandoned Philadelphia to the British,

I have nothing against the men, they have both taken the oath of allegiance, but yet . . . I have my fears; tho' I can allege nothing against them, I do not think the Test was an oily Pill, nor do I think that they have ever been cordial Friends to Independency, the Grand Basis, at this Crisis, of American Liberty.¹⁰⁴

Levers considered the loyalty oath too weak a measure to ensure local commitment to the Revolution. Even if colonial elites like Gordon refused to swear, out of principled commitment or, perhaps, just because their close ties to proprietary authority prevented it, what was to stop ordinary men from conforming for the sake of convenience? Everyone was suspect from Levers' nervous perspective.

In spite of Levers' fears, measuring individual allegiance by requiring oaths was generally effective and taken very seriously; indeed, they rapidly reshaped the political culture of the resistance movement in Easton.¹⁰⁵ When the constable John Batt attempted to bring two men before the court, he was threatened with "a plaguey licking" because he "had not taken the Test according to the late Act of the Assembly." Another person confirmed this threat and added that if Batt attempted to serve him with a warrant, he would have "taken a stick and knocked [him] down."¹⁰⁶ The Test Act quickly became a required badge of commitment to the cause. Those who refused to swear were known throughout the town and suffered harassment and verbal abuse at the very least. With this, a new mark of identity had been established which had serious social consequences.

As the Revolution intensified, the normal operation of courts and other official bodies was suspended, and revolutionary committees assumed a greater role running local government. The members of Easton's Committee of Inspection did not limit themselves to regulating political and martial matters, but aimed also to control inappropriate behavior. This broader role may have been forced upon them, such as when one man petitioned the Committee for redress because with "the Courts of Law being now shut up [one] could find no . . . remedy from thence."¹⁰⁷ But the Committee's expanded role could antagonize people who probably preferred to avoid getting embroiled in the politics of the Revolution. For instance, it found that:

Nell Marr is a common scold and a common disturber of the Peace of the Town of Easton; and . . . is aided and abetted in her disorderly proceedings by Doctor Andrew Ledlie who has kept her for a housekeeper and Whore for many Years.¹⁰⁸

In taking on such responsibilities, the revolutionary leadership in Easton could overstep its bounds and raise the ire of local residents.

Authority in Northampton County was highly contested in the Revolution's chaotic early years. When Levers felt that the town constable was unreliable because he remained loyal to Gordon, Levers requested the assistance of Isaac Sidman, a militia colonel, in examining Gordon about his conduct. Sidman refused to help and passed the assignment on to a young Continental Lieutenant and non-Easton resident. Levers deemed this "an indignity . . . to

the natural strength of this state, and [a] reproach on himself and his fellow citizens."¹⁰⁹ The reticence of local men to support Levers suggests that he lacked a clear understanding of allegiances in the town and failed to situate himself effectively in local social networks.

Levers clearly felt unwelcome in Easton and was even turned out of his house during the war. The same month that he complained about Sidman's refusal to assist him, he appealed to state authorities that his landlord, Conrad Ihrle, would not renew his lease because the owner claimed to have promised the house to his daughter and her new husband John Arndt. Levers explained that "there is not a house to be had in Easton" and hoped to be allowed to move to Allentown and maintain his office as prothonotary despite residing outside the county seat.¹¹⁰ This may have been an innocuous and genuine request, but since Levers fell victim to crowd violence after the war, it seems likely that Ihrle acted to distance himself from an unpopular and overbearing individual who had been appointed to power without significant local support. A group mobilized against Levers in 1785, attacking his house "with stones, tomahawk, and axes." Tearing down the front door, the attackers did "greatly terrify his family and injuriously and insultingly" threaten his house and office.¹¹¹ Although we lack direct evidence about what motivated the attackers, three of the five accused men had connections to people Levers helped prosecute during the Revolution: William and Alexander Gordon, the sons of Lewis Gordon, and James Taylor, an apprentice, whose master Andrew Ledlie had been censured for keeping a prostitute by the revolutionary committee on which Levers sat.

By drawing an increasing number of people into political activity and directly questioning the basis of colonial authority, the Revolution in Easton increased local social conflict and successfully unified a majority to support the patriot cause. Individual German Americans in Easton appeared on both sides of the Revolution, but judging from the high volunteer rate in the town, which included military service by the Lutheran pastor Christian Streit, it appears that most supported the patriot cause.¹¹² An early sign of revolutionary unity at Easton occurred at a mass meeting there on May 22, 1775. The meeting unanimously resolved that "the British Ministry are fully determined and bent upon the total Extinction and utter destruction of American Liberty," and they swore to join together to avert "being reduced to so abject a degree of slavery." The local pledge was circulated in both German and English newspapers, and 87 Easton men, an easy majority of the town's taxpayers, signed to support the Continental Association.¹¹³

While Robert Levers antagonized some people, he motivated many others and served as an important spokesman of the revolutionary movement in Easton. On July 8, 1776, he marched through town as part of a procession of military officers parading "with drums beating, fifes playing, and the standard

(the device for which is the Thirteen United Colonies)" flying overhead. He read the Declaration of Independence from the steps of the Easton courthouse, and no loyalists were reported to have dissented from the "great crowd of spectators" who erupted "with three loud huzzas, and cried out, 'May God long preserve and unite the free and Independent States of America.'" The performance of public rituals of assent to the Revolution played a crucial role unifying local residents and integrating them in a nationwide cause.¹¹⁴

Two leading German Americans in Easton marched to the courthouse as part of the military parade on July 8. Peter Kachlein and John Arndt were both wealthy taxpayers and military officers who strongly supported Independence. Their presence enlisting army volunteers the next day helped stimulate broad commitment to the cause. Kachlein's son served with him as did three of Arndt's relatives. Both men also suffered dearly in the war; Kachlein died while captive in one of the dreaded prison ships in New York harbor, and Arndt lost the use of his left arm after being hit by a small cannonball.¹¹⁵ Indeed, all the men who enlisted at Easton on July 9, 1776, experienced the horrors of combat. Easton soldiers participated in two of the worst patriot military defeats of the war at the battle of Long Island on August 27, 1776, and at the surrender of Fort Washington three months later. By late November more than two thirds of Captain Arndt's company of 101 men had been captured or killed.¹¹⁶

Even before the military debacle, local people pointedly rejected the social changes wrought by the resistance movement and their seizure of government power. Central to these changes was the raising of a local militia. When Jacob Grenewalt told Michael Ohl that he planned to acquire a book to record its members, Ohl warned him, "nobody would sign it — and that he would shit in any such book."¹¹⁷ The disastrous start to the war encouraged further disaffection and bitterness against the revolutionary leadership. One group of local men "damn[ed] the Congress, Convention & Committee — saying that they were all a parcel of Dammed Rascals and were Selling the peoples liberties."¹¹⁸ Rather than rallying support as champions of the peoples' rights, revolutionary leaders in Easton were accused of peddling them.

The most powerful rejection of the whig leadership in Easton built upon a sharp populist grievance. Michael and Jacob Messinger attacked the local Committee as "the [Villains?] at Easton" and described its "leading men" as "Whigs for sake of Gains." Recalling the horrible losses in battle, they pointed out that "many a thousand men we have lost by you Whigs already." Rather than follow such miserable men, they demanded "that the people had better Rise and Hang" the rebel leaders.¹¹⁹ The revolutionary struggle in Easton included a divisive conflict over who should rule at home.

The Messingers adamantly protested that they "had no right to be subject to . . . Laws of men that were not chosen by the majority of the people." As far

as they were concerned, "the Council of Safety were robbers and them that put their laws in force were the same." The Revolution had politicized a large segment of the population, and people like the Messingers considered its egalitarian thrust the only valid basis for rejecting traditional authority. Not only did they characterize leading whigs' commitment as a means to personal profit, they insisted that legitimate revolutionary authority could only be based upon support by a majority. This rationale resonated with the strongest appeals of the radical vanguard of the revolutionary movement. In justifying the creation of a militia two years earlier, the Committee of Correspondence in Philadelphia had adopted similar language. They called men to arms by pledging that they would fight under a "government which will be derived from yourselves, and which will have for its object not the enrollment of one man, or class of men only, but the safety, liberty, and happiness of every individual in the community."¹²⁰ The Messingers and men like them found the revolutionary leadership in Easton badly wanting by such standards.

The Messingers' opposition, however, was not entirely based upon an egalitarian vision. In singling out the Test Act as a particularly offensive instrument of the new government, they made it plain that they opposed the Revolution more broadly. As they saw it, the act required "an unjust oath and the King would hang us all and he had a right to do it." They went on to castigate the "foolish people that hath took the Oath [and] count your selves substantial whigs," since anyone "had as good a right to be against the cause as . . . for it."¹²¹

German Americans had reasonable grounds for finding the Test Act especially odious since it required those of them who had naturalized to explicitly break a previous loyalty oath. In order to enter the British colonies German immigrants were required to "solemnly promise and engage that we will be faithful and bear true allegiance" to the King and the Proprietor and to "strictly observe and conform to the laws . . . to the utmost of our power and best of our understanding."¹²² The rationale for requiring people to swear commitment to the revolutionary government rested upon a belief that individuals could independently declare an autonomous position. But this failed to acknowledge that individuals belonging to particular groups would feel the burden of such decisions quite differently. Like the Quakers in Burlington whose peace testimony required that they decline affirming commitment to the revolutionary government, German Americans had distinctive reasons for dissenting from the demand for revolutionary conformity.¹²³

The Revolution stimulated internal social conflict, and many local people resented the actions of whig leaders. While repeated acts of loyalism appeared mostly in areas where the British military presence could lend occasional assistance, as in New Castle and Burlington, many Easton residents seriously

opposed the patriot cause. Given such deep discord, it seems difficult to explain how Easton residents came together to generally support the revolutionary movement.

The answer lies in understanding the importance of American Indians in shaping the meaning of the Revolution in Easton. As a backcountry town in the 1770s, Easton sat in a cultural borderland where Euro-Americans and Indians confronted one another in complex engagements of conflict and compromise. As the site of several major Indian treaties, a trading center, and a part of an area of significant Moravian missionary work, Easton residents participated in creating a middle ground that mediated between opposing forces.¹²⁴ American separation from Britain created opportunities for Indian nations to negotiate new alliances. As the Iroquois had long known from straddling a broad region of competing European, Indian, and colonial interests, divisions among whites were crucial to diplomacy.¹²⁵ At the start of the war British and American parties both rushed to ensure good relations with Indians whose decisive action might decide its outcome. Easton was immediately called upon to serve as the site for a major meeting between patriots and Indians. As it turns out, it would be the final attempt to forge a middle ground between European Americans and American Indians in the Delaware Valley.

In January, 1777, some 70 Indian men, as well as the women and children who traveled with them, arrived in Easton from the "back parts of the country" and presented themselves "under the protection of The Six Nations."¹²⁶ The same uncertainty over who was to rule at home that divided revolutionary Easton also caused confusion when it came to meeting with Indians. As the negotiator John Bull wrote to the Supreme Executive Council at the end of the month, "we have left Council without any Instructions and Wether we are to have any or Who shall give them, Congress, Council of Safety, or Assembly I will not undertake to say."¹²⁷ While the lines of authority remained unclear, local preparations proceeded smoothly, as might be expected, since Easton had hosted many Indian treaties since becoming the county seat in 1752. Indian access to liquor was restricted, and a guard of three sergeants, 30 privates, a drummer, and a fifer was on hand to properly commemorate the event.¹²⁸

The treaty meeting was held in the recently constructed German Reformed and Lutheran union church in Easton, the largest building in town. It began well, and Bull wrote the Council two days later, reporting that:

the Indians Deliver'd Two Strings, Three Belts and about half their Talk. They having Three belts more to deliver this Day, the Indians seem to be Inclind to act the wise Part, with respect to the Present Dispute if they are relied on they mean to be Neuter, we have already Learnt their good intentions and Great Expectations in Receiving Presents.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, this brief note is the only surviving documentation of the negotiations that occurred in Easton that month. But understood in the context of fuller information about previous treaties held there, we can see that the basic structure of Indian-white relations in late eighteenth-century Pennsylvania was being maintained with the use of strings and belts to shape official communication.

However, the end of Imperial restraint destroyed the fragile equilibrium under which Indians and their land were only gradually exploited by Euro-American settlers in colonial Pennsylvania. The more severe terms of post-colonial relations appeared immediately when the Continental Congress refused to recognize the agreement reached at Easton. The Committee of Indian Affairs dismissed the negotiated truce, claiming that neither side had the appropriate "powers . . . to enable them to engage in such a Treaty."¹³⁰ While the Pennsylvania War Office still advised Colonel Labar at Easton that "great care should be taken that those Indians be well treated, especially at this critical time when every indulgence is necessary to be given to those people," the town would never again host a meeting aimed at accommodation.¹³¹

Instead, a concerted attack against Indians was soon to begin, and Easton served as a major staging ground. In May and June, 1779, troops began gathering there for a patriot foray into Indian country. General Washington stated the purpose of the assault clearly in his detailed directive to its leader, Major-General John Sullivan.

The expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians The immediate object is their *total destruction* and devastation, and the capture of as many persons of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground, and prevent their planting more do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be *merely overrun, but DESTROYED*.¹³²

These terms were insufficient by themselves, for Washington required a campaign of unparalleled ferocity. Destruction was to be pursued unabated, regardless of appeals the army might receive while carrying out its mission. The General explained,

you will not by any means listen to overtures of peace before the *total destruction* of their settlements is effected Our future security will be in their inability to injure, in the distance to which they are driven, and in the terror with which the severity of the chastisement they will receive will impress them. Peace without this would be fallacious and temporary.¹³³

By all accounts the patriot army fulfilled this vision. As one Onondaga chief later described the American attack, "they put to death all the Women and Children, excepting some of the Young Women, whom they carried away for the use of their soldiers & were afterwards put to death in a more shameful manner."¹³⁴ At the end of the campaign, Sullivan reported the extent of destruction with considerable pride:

The number of towns destroyed by this army amounted to forty, besides scattering houses. The quantity of corn destroyed at a moderate computation, must amount to one hundred and sixty thousand bushels, with a vast quantity of vegetables of every kind . . . [There is not] a single town left in the country of the Five Nations. It is with pleasure I inform Congress that this army has not suffered the loss of forty men in action . . . though, perhaps, few troops have experienced a more fatiguing campaign.¹³⁵

Americans confined this type of war to Indians who were understood as enemies beyond the pale of civilization. Similar orders were never issued against the British army or upon Euro-American settlements. Indeed, the campaign's violence led some to recoil. Nicholas Fish, a regiment commander, commented in a letter that the country looked like "the Shades of Death" and that the purpose of the expedition was "an undistinguished destruction and carnage."¹³⁶

This was the enemy and type of war that rallied Easton residents to support the Revolution. As Henry Bush's widow later reported, her husband served when drafted to fight the Indians. Bush was one of Easton's many "seven months men" in the anti-Indian militia under Captain Van Etten.¹³⁷ The Revolutionary War against Indians was more a struggle of brutal violence than of lofty ideals. Samuel Shoemaker offered one gory example of his militia service when he recalled a long pursuit of seven Indians who had kidnapped a woman, two children, and several horses loaded with stolen goods. After tracking them across 25 miles for over a day and a half, Shoemaker and his band finally came upon the sleeping camp "unperceived." Seizing the advantage they swept down upon the Indians and "succeeded in killing six . . . and wounding the other so that we tracked him by the blood for some duration" before killing him as well.¹³⁸ Loyalists around Easton allied themselves with local Indians and faced the ultimate consequences if their actions were discovered. For instance, a British prisoner at Easton reported that a "very old man" had been hanged in the town "for piloting some people through the back woods, to the Indians."¹³⁹

Journals of the soldiers in Sullivan's campaign who camped in Easton for two months in 1779 make plain just how divided the new nation might have been without Indians as opponents and symbols to remind them of what

patriots shared. Samuel M. Shute saw in Easton a miserable town of about 150 houses with only "three elegant buildings in it, and about as many inhabitants that are any ways agreeable. Take them in general they are a very inhospitable set — all High Dutch & Jew."¹⁴⁰ Daniel Livermore shared a similar opinion, even if he adopted a slightly different term, of Easton residents who were "chiefly Low Dutch, and . . . worship wholly in that way. There are some few Jews living here, who are the principal merchants of the place." Still, he found Easton a bit more agreeable, since it was "pleasantly situated on a flat level of ground" with an "elegant" court house and German church.¹⁴¹

James McMichael expressed the sharpest separation between visiting Anglo soldiers and local Germans. Describing his march out of Easton, he commented, "I was looked upon as a barbarian by the inhabitants, and they appeared to me like so many human beings scarcely endowed with the qualifications equal to that of the brute species." By contrast he found the residents of Morristown, New Jersey, "very hospitable" because they were "all professors of the Presbyterian religion, which renders them to me very agreeable."¹⁴² Religion and ethnicity were closely related and made up major sources of division in colonial society. The significance of these differences were both heightened by revolutionary conflict and also submerged in the new alliances and identities produced during the struggle.

Comments about the group attitude of German Americans in Easton toward the Revolution are scarce. As the mainstay of the local population there was little occasion to distinguish them as unique, except by visitors to the area like McMichael. Few local Germans had use for a static and homogenized image of their group identity. It would take an outsider like Robert Levers to make sweeping statements about the political allegiance of Germans in Easton. When "several hundred . . . very treasonable printed papers" in German were discovered in a package left in town in November 1777, Levers took them as a partial explanation for "the Germans generally at this time being so inactive, rather unfriendly if not inimical" to the cause of Independence.¹⁴³ In contrast, German Americans perceived diversity among themselves while projecting greater homogeneity upon the non-German "English" who settled among them, like the Anglicized Scot Lewis Gordon.

The period of active fighting against the British in the Delaware Valley had mostly come to a close by 1779, even though the peace would not be established among white belligerents until 1783 and the war against the Indians would last into the 1790s. By the time General Sullivan's army returned to Easton in the Fall of 1779, the post-revolutionary settlements in the area had begun to be constructed. A Christian explanatory framework would prove far more important for this settlement than it had been in bringing on the Revolution itself. As we have already seen in the sermon preached to the New Castle militia, formal assemblies of fighting men required the blessing of a

Christian sermon, and a similar ritual was performed as Sullivan's campaign drew to a close. The military chaplain Israel Evans preached a sermon to the returning troops at Easton's union church which encouraged them not to celebrate "the pomp and triumph of victory," but rather to commemorate their success "with praise and gratitude to the Lord of Hosts and the God of battle."¹⁴⁴ Most of the sermon focused on how God was the author of the victory and merited praise. In conclusion, however, Evans turned to the future implications of the campaign for the new nation. He commended the troops for

hav[ing] opened a passage into the wilderness, where the Gospel has never yet been received. That extensive region, which was never before traversed, except by wild beasts, and men as wild as they, shall yet have the Gospel preached in [their?] Churches. . . . For it cannot be supposed, that so large a part of the continent shall forever continue a haunt of savages, and the dreary abodes of superstition and idolatry.¹⁴⁵

The soldier Erkuries Beatty noted that this "very elegant oration . . . suitable to the occasion" was heard by the whole army.¹⁴⁶ This early vision of manifest destiny to spread west as an explicitly Christian nation was central to the creation of a national identity that would develop over the next 50 years.

The British and loyalist alliance with Indians solidified Easton residents' commitment to the Revolution and by the end of the war had helped shape a new understanding of local people's relationship to government. Just after peace had been settled, a mass meeting was held at Easton to protest the reappearance of loyalists who had joined the Indians during the war. At the meeting a set of instructions was drafted to the State Assembly. Local men were prepared to tell their political representatives what to do and they cited the radical constitution of 1776 as providing the right for such a novel form of political communication. Not only were Easton residents participating in a more direct form of democratic government, they had developed a new sense of themselves as Americans united in revolutionary struggle. They explained that those returning to the patriot community "had joined the Indians" and "not only committed every species of devastation that attends the progress of such savage enemies, but had . . . their hands in the blood of our unprotected countrymen."¹⁴⁷ The fundamental mark of difference in revolutionary Easton had become one that separated civilized Americans from the savages on the other side. Both in the experience of fighting and of the conceptual framework presented by ministers, the Indians' presence helped unify what otherwise might have been diverse and unintegrated bands of European settlers and their descendants in America. In the course of the Revolution, German Americans in Easton began to be included within the respectable community to a greater

degree than in the colonial period.

The welter of changes wrought by the Revolution in New Castle, Burlington, and Easton might initially seem to reinforce a sense of the differences among these places. In New Castle, Presbyterians and Anglicans were sharply divided by the Revolution and the status of African Americans was thrust to the fore. These seething social divisions would have to be confronted in order to establish a stable post-colonial society in the wake of the Revolution. In Burlington, religious and ethnic identity encouraged Quakers and Anglicans to remain loyal to Britain. Through the extraordinary detail of Margaret Morris' journal, we may observe how armed struggle contributed to an alteration in gender relations. Finally, in Easton, German Americans had divided ethnic experiences that could have pushed them into either camp in the intensely polarized politics of revolutionary Pennsylvania. In the end, however, Indians' prominence as British allies forced local whites to recognize common bonds and unite in a Revolution that swept Quaker and Anglican elites and their allies from power.

These experiences reveal more than divergent local forces. Residents in the three Delaware River towns participated in a fundamentally similar process as the Revolution unfolded by inflaming awareness of diverse intersecting identities. The particular identities differed in each town, but in all of them the insertion of a stark political choice — patriot or loyalist — intensified, disrupted, and altered the balance of long-standing local identities whose stability had defined the *status quo*. The rejection of colonial authority in the Delaware Valley upset overlapping local relationships among religious, ethnic, racial, gender, and status identities. The teeming diversity of the region had been politicized, without which the colonial order would not have been defeated. In the ensuing period of early national development relationships among local identities would have to be renegotiated. The nation would confront — and be composed of — newly assertive local identities that had themselves been altered by their role in a revolutionary movement for independence.

Notes

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1. The strongest work in the neo-progressive tradition includes Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series [Cited hereafter as *WMQ*], 38 (1981), 561-623, and Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets," *WMQ*, 25 (1968), 371-407. The Revolution in Philadelphia was significantly driven by economic-based animosity, which helped make the conflict more radical in the Philadelphia-hinterland towns examined here. See especially, Steven Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987) and Richard Ryerson, *The Revolution is Now Begun* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978).

2. The best studies of republicanism include Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), and Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: Norton, 1969). Robert E. Shalhope offered two especially useful overviews of the huge literature that this trio helped to spawn: "Toward a Republican Synthesis," *WMQ*, 29 (1972), 49-80 and "Republican and Early American Historiography," *WMQ*, 39 (1982), 334-56. For an astute criticism of the abuse of the term, see Daniel T. Rogers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History*, 79 (1992), 11-38.

3. Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 137. On the Middle Colonies generally, see 124-141. The most influential study of the Delaware Valley, which argues

against the significance of its diversity, is James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972). For a bold statement about the importance of the region's diversity, see the introduction to Michael Zuckerman, ed., *Friends and Neighbors: Group Life in America's First Plural Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 3-25; as well as the good range of Delaware Valley community studies collected there. The best recent assessment of Mid-Atlantic historiography is Wayne Bodle, "Themes and Directions in Middle Colonies Historiography, 1980-1994," *WMQ*, 51 (1994), 355-388.

4. Mary Beth Norton, *The British-Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 8.

5. Harold Bell Hancock, "County Committees and the Growth of Independence in the Three Lower Counties, 1765-1776," *Delaware History* [Cited hereafter as *DH*.], 15 (1973), 269-278; Edward Shippen quoted on 272.

6. Loyalist Memorial of Theodore Maurice, original in the Public Records Office, Kew, England. Photostat at the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington and reprinted in Harold Hancock, "New Castle County Loyalists," *DH*, 4 (1951), 339, 345. [Cited hereafter as Hancock, "NCC."]

7. All New Castle tax list analysis here is based on the New Castle Hundred Tax Assessment List, 1776, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.

8. Harold Bell Hancock, *The Loyalists of Revolutionary Delaware* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1977), 73. [Cited hereafter as Hancock, *Revolutionary Delaware*.]

9. John Dickinson, *A Letter from the Country to a Gentleman in the City* (Philadelphia, 1773). Reprinted in Early American Imprints, 1st Series [Cited hereafter as *EAI*.], #12751.

10. The Committee of Tarring and Feathering, "To the Delaware Pilots" (Philadelphia, 1773).

Broadsides reprinted in EAI #12942 and #12943.

11. For two excellent, but very different, assessments of how the Revolution occurred because of the involvement of people outside of formal politics, see the classic assessment of seaman's mobilization by Jesse Lemisch (cited previously) and T. H. Breen's interpretation of broad changes in consumer thought in "Narrative of Commercial Life," *WMQ*, 50 (1993), 471-501.

12. The best study of the religious roots of revolutionary ideology only considers the New England context: Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Patricia Bonomi offers a broad synthesis in *Under the Cope of Heaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 187-216. For more contentious recent views, see the essays in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994). For a mid-Atlantic study, see Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion, American Revolutionary War and the Reformed Clergy* (New York: Paragon House, 1994).

13. Joseph Montgomery, "A Sermon Preached at Christina Bridge and New Castle" (Philadelphia, 1775), 7-8. EAI #14261. Montgomery's invocation of the simultaneity of patriot prayer throughout the continent resonates with Benedict Anderson's emphasis on such awareness as crucial for the development of nationalism. See his *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Press, rev. ed., 1991).

14. Montgomery, 9.

15. *Ibid.*, 12.

16. *Ibid.*, 23.

17. *Ibid.*, 27.

18. See the previous citation to the scholarly literature on republicanism.

19. Montgomery, 10.

20. *Ibid.*, 11.

21. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

22. *Ibid.*, 11.

23. *Ibid.*, 29-30.

24. Charles H. Metzger, "Chaplains in the American Revolution," *Catholic Historical Review*, 31 (1945-46), 77.

25. Porter published his defense in the

Pennsylvania Gazette, January 17, 1776. He had the highest assessment rate in New Castle Hundred in 1776 at £62. Out of 264 assessments that year, only 3 other men were rated above £38.

26. Such claims were not unusual. See, for example, the petition of slaveholders in Sussex County who claimed to have gone on board a British vessel and traded with them in order to search for runaway slaves. Hancock, *Revolutionary Delaware*, 101. Additionally, the use of anti-slavery rhetoric was central to revolutionary ideology. The Dickinson and Tar and Feathering broadsides, discussed earlier, as well as the Montgomery sermon all explicitly called on their audiences to determine, in Dickinson's words, "our condition as slaves or freemen." This patriot vision lies at the core of Edmund Morgan's argument about the American paradox where slavery was abhorred at the same time that slaveholding was protected. See his *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1975), 4, 369.

27. "The Revolutionary War Diary of William Adair," *DH*, 13 (1968), 154-165. See entries for April 10, 1777, and May 5, 1778.

28. For an excellent collection of diverse work on African-American experience in the period, see Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1983). The most powerful recent assessment, which stresses African-American Christianity, is Sylvia R. Frey, *Water From the Rock, Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). For a primary source collection of slaves that fled masters' control, see Graham Russell Hodges, ed., *The Black Loyalist Directory* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996).

29. Samuel Patterson to James Booth, undated letter, William Kent Gilbert Collection of Colonial and Revolutionary Documents of the State of Delaware, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. Volume 1, 56.

30. For Read's actions at the Continental Congress and relationship with Dickinson, see John Munroe, *Colonial Delaware* (Millwood, New York: KTO Press, 1978), 251-252.

31. For the political and social importance of court days in a rural landscape, see Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York: Norton, 1982).
32. Thomas Rodney to Caesar Rodney, New Castle, July [2]4, 1776, Rodney Family Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Hancock, *Revolutionary Delaware*, 54.
33. Caesar Rodney to Thomas McKean, May, 8, 1778, reprinted in George Herbert Ryden, ed., *Letters to and From Caesar Rodney, 1756-1784* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933), 267-8.
34. Loyalist Memorial of John Watson, reprinted in Hancock, "NCC," 335.
35. *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 4, 1782, quoted in J. H. Powell, "John Dickinson," *DH*, 1 (1946), 113-114.
36. Bruce E. Burgoyne, trans. and ed., *A Hessian Diary of the American Revolution by Johann Conrad Döla* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 77.
37. Examination of Captain Moore, November 2, 1777, reprinted in *Delaware Archives* (New York: AMS Press, 5 vols., 1974 reprint; orig., 1911-19), vol. 3, 1307-1308.
38. Jacob Vandegrift petition to the General Assembly, October 30, 1781, quoted in Harold B. Hancock, ed., "Revolutionary War Material in the Hall of Records," *DH*, 18 (1976), 59-61.
39. Edward H Tatum, Jr., *The American Journal of Ambrose Serle* (San Marino, CA: Huntington, 1940), 257, 259-260.
40. *Ibid.*, 259-260.
41. Ross also had close family ties to conservative whigs. His brother George, a Philadelphian, signed the Declaration of Independence, and his sister Gertrude had married George Read of New Castle. Robert T. Conrad, rev. and ed., *Sanderson's Biography of the Signers* (Richmond, VA: Harold & Murray, 1846), 548-549.
42. John Clark to Samuel Patterson, June 24, 1777, reprinted in William Thompson Read, *Life and Correspondence of George Read* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870), 317-319.
43. Undated letter [before Fall 1777] from an anonymous spy, reprinted in Read, *Life*, 323.
44. New Castle County, Court of Oyer and Terminer, quoted in Hancock, *Revolutionary Delaware*, 71.
45. Loyalist Memorial of John Watson, reprinted in Hancock, "NCC," 334.
46. Loyalist Memorial of John Drake, reprinted in Hancock, "NCC," 346.
47. Tatum, 258.
48. Wayne Bodle generously gave me a photocopy of the original from the Public Records Office, Kew, England. It has also been reprinted in Hancock, *Revolutionary Delaware*, 118-124.
49. Reprinted, along with a biographical essay, in John A. Munroe, "Timoleon's Biographical History of Dionysius, Tyrant of Delaware," *Delaware Notes*, 31 (1958), 137, 114-115, 136-137.
50. John A. Munroe, "Parson in Politics," *DH*, 23 (1988-89), 300-312; and H. Clay Reed, "The Delaware Constitution of 1776," *Delaware Notes*, 6 (1930), 31, 99n.
51. Margaret Morris, *Private Journal Kept During the Revolutionary War* (New York: Arno Press, 1969; orig., 1836), 6. A useful biographical essay can be found in John W. Jackson, *Margaret Morris, Her Journal with Biographical Sketch and Notes* (Philadelphia: MacManus Co., 1949), which also includes a reprint of the manuscript version of the journal.
52. Morris, 5.
53. For a recent analysis of non-patriot women's revolutionary experience in Philadelphia, see Judy Van Buskirk, "They Didn't Join the Band: Disaffected Women in Revolutionary Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History*, 62 (1995), 306-329.
54. Burlington's first taste of martial hostilities occurred on December 11, 1776; for the events of that day, see Morris, 6-10.
55. John W. Jackson, *The Pennsylvania Navy 1775-1781, The Defense of the Delaware* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1974), 56. See chapter six generally for naval preparations around Burlington in 1776 and 1777.
56. On the raids, see Morris, 11-12.
57. *Ibid.*, 33.
58. *Ibid.*, 10.
59. *Ibid.*, 12-13.
60. *Ibid.*, 14, 13.
61. *Ibid.*, 14, 21.
62. *Ibid.*, 23.
63. *Ibid.*, 21.

64. "Journal of Sergeant William Young," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 8 (1884), 260.
65. Morris, 17.
66. *Ibid.*, 20.
67. Society of Friends, "The Testimony of the People Called Quakers" (broadside dated 1/24/75), EAI #14052.
68. Society of Friends, "An Epistle From the Meeting for Sufferings" (circular letter dated 12/20/76), EAI #43025. On Quakers in the Revolution generally, see Arthur J. Mekeel, *The Relation of the Quakers to the American Revolution* (Washington: University Press of America, 1979).
69. Morris, 16-17.
70. "John Hunt's Diary [1770-1800]," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, 52 (1934), 177-193, 223-239, and *idem*, 53 (1935), 27-43, 111-128, 194-209, 251-262. Quote for 1/22/77 (1934), 224-225. His trying times continued well after the Revolution as his son Samuel would be imprisoned in 1786 for refusing to pay taxes to cover war debt; see entry for 10/86 (1935), 115.
71. Burlington Monthly Meeting minutes, quoted in Lois V. Givens, "Burlington City Friends in the Revolution," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, 69 (1951), 202, 203.
72. Morris, 24, 23.
73. Two major studies of women in the Revolution, published in the same year, remain influential: Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic, Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: Norton, 1986; orig. 1980); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters, The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1980). Both argue that the war brought significant change for women whose status became less isolated with the new centrality of republican ideology and its explicit place for women in the public social order. For more recent work, see Ronald Hoffman and Albert, eds., *Women in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1989); Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife," *WMQ*, 44 (1987), 690-721; Forum, "Beyond Roles, Beyond Spheres: Thinking about Gender in the Early Republic," *WMQ*, 46 (1989), 565-585; Cathy Davidson, "The Novel as Subversive Activity" in Alfred F. Young, ed., *Beyond the American Revolution* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 283-316.
74. Morris, 34.
75. *Ibid.*, 34-35.
76. *Ibid.*, 36.
77. *Ibid.*, 5-6.
78. *Ibid.*, 17.
79. *Ibid.*, 25.
80. Odell to Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [Cited hereafter as SPG], July 5, 1768, quoted in George Morgan Hills, *History of the Church in Burlington* (Trenton: Sharp, 1876), 295.
81. *Ibid.*, 291-292. In letters to the SPG on October 2, 1767, and on January 6, 1768, Odell estimates that Burlington was composed of about 200 families fewer than 20 of whom were Anglican, three or four Presbyterian, and all the rest Quakers. He overestimates Quaker dominance in Burlington; see Liam Riordan, "Identities in the New Nation: The Creation of an American Mainstream in the Delaware Valley, 1770-1830," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), chapters three and four.
82. Thomas Chandler, SPG report, quoted in *Ibid.*, 306-307.
83. New Jersey Provincial Congress, quoted in *Ibid.*, 309. Also see Cynthia Dubin Edelberg, *Jonathan Odell, Loyalist Poet of the American Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).
84. Edelberg, 41-43.
85. Third, fourth, and fifth stanzas of "Song for a Fishing Party Near Burlington," quoted in Hills, 310. Odell noted in the margin of the manuscript copy that Protestant was a term specifically adopted by a circle of loyalists.
86. Odell to SPG, January 7, 1777, quoted in Hills, 314.
87. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1777, 316-8.
88. On rape in New Jersey during the war, see Norton, *Daughters*, 202-204.
89. Hunt, 225. He continued this work for years and helped found the Burlington Abolition Society in 1793.
90. *Ibid.*, 227. This note, obviously added some years later, is in the margin of the entry for 9/26/77.

91. For the most recent treatment of this law, see Judith Apter Klinghoffer and Lois Elkins, "The Petticoat Electors': Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 12 (1992), 159-193.

92. For two local historians' characterization of ethnic alignments in colonial politics, see Henry Manuscript, "Easton" volume, 58-59, Historical Society of Pennsylvania [Cited hereafter as HSP], and Israel Daniel Rupp, *History of Northampton, Lehigh, Monroe, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties* (New York: Arno Press, reprint 1971; orig. 1845), 10. The political allegiance of Germans changed over time as Aaron Foglemen has demonstrated in *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), chapter 5.

93. Little has been written about this early ethnic and immigrant society beyond their own *Historical Catalogue of the St. Andrew's Society, 1749-1881* (Philadelphia: St. Andrew's Society, 1881). I appreciate Tim Hanson's suggestions about eighteenth-century Scots ethnicity in America and the reference to this volume.

94. For a brief biography of Gordon, see A. D. Chidsey Jr., *A Frontier Village, Pre-Revolutionary Easton* (Easton, PA: Northampton County Historical Society, 1940), chapter 8, especially 144. For a useful overview of the government structure and its offices, see Wayne L. Bockelman, "Local Government in Colonial Pennsylvania" in Bruce C. Daniels, ed., *Town and County, Essays on the Structure of Local Government in the American Colonies* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 216-237; on county justices, 224.

95. Northampton County Collection [Cited hereafter as NoCC], "Pleas and Prosecutions," Charges to Grand Jury, June 1775. HSP.

96. German newspaper publishers like Christopher Sauer and Henry Miller exhibited a close understanding of English legal and political concepts in the late eighteenth century, as demonstrated in Sauer's widely quoted 1764 article reminding his readers that German settlers in British North America fully possessed the rights of Englishmen. However,

the views of such leading figures should not be accepted as representing the majority of German opinion. The fact that Sauer felt compelled to make such an argument to his literate audience suggests that his position was contested. For a strong discussion of these newspaper editors that places them in an Anglo-American context, see Willi Paul Adams, "The Colonial German-language Press and the American Revolution" in Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1980), 151-228.

97. NoCC, Miscellaneous Manuscripts (1758-1767), March 18, 1758, 19.

98. For an insightful assessment of ethnic hatred in late seventeenth-century New York, see John Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression" in William Pencak and Conrad Edick Wright, eds., *Authority and Resistance in Early New York* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1988), 56-94.

99. On German and German-American integration into the legal process in Reading, Pennsylvania (the heavily German seat of Berks County), see Laura L. Becker, "The People and the System: Legal Activities in a Colonial Pennsylvania Town," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 105 (1981), 135-149; *idem*, "The American Revolution as a Community Experience: A Case Study of Reading, Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1978).

100. Henry Mss, "Easton," 57, 81.

101. "Minutes of the Committee of Observation and Inspection of Northampton County, Pennsylvania, 1774-1777," reprinted in *Two Hundred Years of Life in Northampton County, Pennsylvania* (Easton, PA: Northampton County Bicentennial Commission, 11 vols., 1976), vol. 6, 33-78. Cited hereafter as "Committee Minutes." For Wigdon's insult, see "Committee Minutes," August 2, 1776, 56.

102. Samuel Hazard, et al., *Pennsylvania Archives* (Harrisburg and Philadelphia: State Press, 10 series, 1838-1935), *Colonial Records*, vol. 11, January 1777, 73.

103. *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st Series [Cited hereafter as *PA Arch.*, 1st.], vol. 5, October 8,

1777, 650-651. For other charges levied against Gordon by Levers, see *idem*, vol. 6, 5-6, 344-345, 534. I have benefited from Francis Fox's assessment of the Levers-Gordon conflict in "The Prothonotary: Linchpin of Provincial and State Government in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History*, 59 (1992), 41-53.

104. Levers to Timothy Matlack, March 7, 1778, reprinted in *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 6, 342.

105. For an excellent analysis of revolutionary disaffection in Pennsylvania, see Anne M. Ousterhout, *A State Divided, Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987). For her discussion of the Test Act, see 161-163, 191-194.

106. Deposition of John Batt, August 18, 1777, NoCC, Misc. Mss. (1767-1778), 193.

107. "Committee Minutes," July 9, 1776, 52-53.

108. *Ibid.*, August 31, 1776, 59.

109. Levers to Council, March 9, 1778, *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 6, 346.

110. Levers to Thomas Wharton, March 13, 1778, *Ibid.*, 362.

111. Levers deposition before Justice Peter Rhoades, September, 21, 1785. NoCC, Misc. Mss., (1778-1797), 159.

112. On the military career of the man who served as Easton's Lutheran pastor from 1769 to 1779, see Alton R. Koenning, "Christian Streit, Revolutionary War Chaplain," *Lutheran Historical Conference, Essays and Reports*, (1977), 3-17.

113. "Committee Minutes," 36-37.

114. *New England Journal*, July 20, 1776, quoted in John B. Stoudt, *The Liberty Bells of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Campbell, 1930), 136. The parade was also reported in a German newspaper in Philadelphia, Henry Miller's *Staatsbote*, July 10, 1776. See Henry Mss., "General," 161. On the crucial role of public rituals in the Revolution and their role in the formation of early nationalism, see David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent," *Journal of American History*, 82 (1995), 37-61.

115. Information about Peter Kachlein is drawn from the pension application of his son, Peter Kachlein Jr., Roll 1456, #W2945.

Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Warrant Files, 2670 microfilm rolls, National Archives, Washington, DC, Examined at The David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, PA. Arndt information is drawn from the account in his family Bible, reprinted and translated in John Stover Arndt, *The Story of the Arndts* (Philadelphia: Stower, 1922), 11-22.

116. On the military losses, see H. M. M. Richards, "The Pennsylvania-Germans in the British Military Prisons of the Revolutionary War," *Pennsylvania German Society*, 32 (1924), 14. A copy of Arndt's muster roll appears in Peter Kachlein, Jr.'s pension application, cited above. For the casualty list, see William Egle, ed., *Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution, Associated Battalions and Militia, 1775-1783* (Harrisburg: Myers, 2 vols., 1890-92), vol. 2, 575-576.

117. "Committee Minutes," June 6, 1776, 47. Ohl was forced to sign a public apology for his statements, it appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 10, 1776.

118. "Committee Minutes," November, 19, 1776, 63.

119. Deposition of Andrew Sullivan [Sullamen?], February 6, 1778, NoCC, Misc. Mss. (1767-1778), 197.

120. "Address of the Committee of Correspondence, To the Associators of Pennsylvania, June 25, 1776," reprinted in Egle, vol. 1, 259.

121. Sullivan deposition, 197.

122. Naturalization oath quoted in Elmer E.S. Johnson, "The Test Act of June 13, 1777," *Pennsylvania German Society*, 28-39 (1930), 18.

123. For an explicit complaint that the Test Act was contrary to the naturalization oath, see the petition from two Northampton County men reprinted in Richard K. MacMaster, *Conscience in Crisis* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1979), 419-420. For an argument about the significance of the Test Acts and the federal Constitution, see Owen S. Ireland, *Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics: Ratifying the Constitution in Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995).

124. The metaphor of the middle ground as a negotiated cultural borderland is the central

contribution of Richard White's brilliant work, *The Middle Ground; Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

125. On the Iroquois, see Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

126. Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington DC: U.S. Government, 34 vols., 1907-1934), vol. 7, 62-63.

127. Bull to Council, January 29, 1777, *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 5, 201.

128. "Committee Minutes," 68-69.

129. Bull to Council, January 31, 1777, *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 5, 208.

130. Ford, 166.

131. War Office to Labar, April 29, 1777, *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 5, 325.

132. George Washington to James Sullivan, May 31, 1779, quoted in Thomas C. Amory, *The Military Services and Public Life of Major-General John Sullivan* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1968; orig., 1868), 104. On Sullivan's campaign generally, see Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743-1807* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984); and Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 194-197.

133. Washington quoted in Amory, 106.

134. Quoted in Calloway, 53.

135. Sullivan to Congress, September 30, 1779, quoted in Amory, 130-139.

136. Nicholas Fish, letter, quoted in David J. Fowler, *Guide to the Sol Feinstone Collection of the David Library of the American Revolution* (Washington Crossing, PA: David Library, 1994), item #1879.

137. Henry Bush, revolutionary pension application, roll 432, #W4138. For another

Easton resident, see Isaac Berlin, roll 225, #W4638.

138. Samuel Shoemaker, revolutionary pension application, roll 2178, #S17089.

139. E. A. Benians, ed., *A Journal by Thomas Hughes, 1778-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), 101. I appreciate Judy Van Buskirk's reference to this source.

140. "Journal of Lieutenant Samuel M. Shute," reprinted in Frederick Cook, ed., *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan* (Auburn, NY: Knapp, Peck, and Thompson, 1887), 268.

141. "Journal of Captain Daniel Livermore," reprinted in *Ibid.*, 180.

142. "Diary of Lieutenant James McMichael of the Pennsylvania Line, 1776-1778," reprinted in *PA Arch.*, 2nd, vol. 15, 207, 204. I appreciate numerous suggestions from Greg Knouff including bringing this source to my attention.

143. Levers to Matlack, November 15, 1777, *PA Arch.*, 1st, vol. 6, 5-6.

144. Israel Evans, *A Discourse Delivered at Easton* (Philadelphia: Bradford, 1779), 9. Reprinted in EAI #16266.

145. *Ibid.*, 39.

146. "Diary of Erkuries Beatty," reprinted in *Journals of the Military Expedition*, 37.

147. Instructions to Pennsylvania Assembly, August 20, 1783, quoted in Henry Mss., "General," 168-170.

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