

**A TUMULTUOUS PEOPLE: THE RAGE FOR  
LIBERTY AND THE AMBIANCE OF VIOLENCE  
IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES IN THE YEARS  
PRECEDING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>**

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*I*t is a daunting task to make sense of the Middle Colonies—Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware—in the period before the American Revolution.<sup>2</sup> More than elsewhere in British North America, these four colonies were a discordant medley of peoples of different ethnicities, religions, values, and economic interests, who often viewed government, whether local or imperial, as an intrusive force.<sup>3</sup> They were a region with two competing, contrasting focal points: New York City and Philadelphia. They were a land where Quaker pacifists crossed paths with the combative Scots Irish; where large, wealthy landowners, who craved tenants, fought against poorer people, who yearned to own their own small farms; and where colonial governors and provincial assemblies repeatedly vied for power.<sup>4</sup>

Although it sometimes appeared as if all that united the region's peoples was that they inhabited a territory that bisected New England and the South, the reality was much more complicated. If scholars heed Wayne Bodle and view the Middle Colonies as

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“locuses of interactive behavior,” they become more intelligible.<sup>5</sup> The four colonies were a gaggle of tumultuous individuals, groups, and communities, who cherished liberty, but who had with remarkable frequency employed force to settle disputes and to advance their own self-interest. It was, in fact, their rage for liberty and the ambiance of violence that provide a true picture of who they were and why they responded as they did to the Revolution.<sup>6</sup> Violence and the rage for liberty were obviously present in the other nine colonies, but the way these two forces interacted with the polyglot population of the Middle Colonies demands closer scrutiny. A brief comparison with the more culturally and ethnically homogenous New England will underscore that reality.

This essay will consequently examine the rage for liberty and the ambiance of violence. It will argue that what unified the four colonies was, paradoxically, their diversity. The four were not a cohesive community shaped by a common identity; they were instead a cluster of turbulent, diverse peoples united by a common interest: asserting, protecting, and experiencing liberty, or rather their own varied interpretations of what they thought liberty meant. Part of the period’s excitement was that Middle Colonists were battling to define that term. Despite the wrangling, the absence of a single overarching theology and an abundance of economic opportunity had created an environment where they could realistically yearn for liberty. A Middle Colonist aptly explained in a local newspaper how many ordinary people in the region understood the concept: “Every man has a right to do what he pleased, provided he did not injure others who had the same Rights as himself.”<sup>7</sup> Although American writers in this period invariably argued that *right* and *duty* went hand and hand, the second half of that sentence was often ignored in practice, for violence was a potent tool for securing and enhancing their own or their own group’s notion of liberty at the expense of others. Were these people ever moved by idealism? Yes, but it was typically colored by their own needs and interests.<sup>8</sup>

## 1. The Rage for Liberty

It was not merely that Middle Colonists honored liberty, but rather that so many revered it, were energized by it, and contoured it to satisfy their own needs, values, and interests.<sup>9</sup> It was a passion as much as a rational construct. The talking and writing about it could be as overwhelming as a tidal wave. In October 1765 “Publicus” declined to discuss the subject, for so much had already been published about it.<sup>10</sup> “B.A.” avowed that a true patriot

would sacrifice "his life in the cause of Liberty."<sup>11</sup> A Philadelphia essayist asserted that "A day, an hour of virtuous liberty/Is worth a whole eternity of bondage."<sup>12</sup> "Sentinel" insisted that "no rational creature would *choose* to have his life and property absolutely subject to the arbitrary will of another, one of his own kind, frail and fallible like himself."<sup>13</sup> In June 1766, when Isaac Sears, New York City's foremost Liberty Boy, buried his seven-year-old son, who had drowned, a great concourse of people attended to console and to salute the man who had preserved their liberties in the Stamp Act crisis.<sup>14</sup> As a writer declared in 1767, "Where liberty is wanting, little that is great and valuable can be expected."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the absence of liberty was slavery. As John Dickinson opined: "Is it possible to form an idea of slavery more *compleat*, more *miserable*, more *disgraceful*, than that of a people where *justice is administered*, *government exercised*, and a *standing army maintained*, at the expense of the people, and yet without the least dependence upon them?"<sup>16</sup>

How did so many people learn about liberty? It was a spirit they had absorbed from multiple sources: "God" and "Nature"; the British Constitution; the seventeenth-century English Civil Wars; John Locke; *Cato's Letters*; the Great Awakening; the traditions of the British borderlands; the confidence that came from participating in the Seven Years' War; the economic ideas that were circulating throughout the colonies and that Adam Smith would soon express so cogently; the lessons learned during decades of political warfare, promoting their own interests; the sense of opportunity created by the expanse of ocean and frontier that surrounded them; their desire to thrive in a population of diverse competing individuals and groups; the reading of novels and autobiographies; and the emphasis on individualism fostered by the commercial and consumer revolutions.<sup>17</sup> The more people imbibed its spirit the more intoxicated they became about its possibilities and the fulfillment of their own self-interest.<sup>18</sup>

William Penn and the Society of Friends, of course, played a significant role in spreading the idea of liberty in the region, most especially in Pennsylvania. Penn founded his proprietary colony in the late seventeenth century on the basis of "liberty of conscience and the equality of all white settlers." As expansive as his vision was for the period in which he lived, his commitment was not absolute. Although he believed that the "Inner Light" (God) dwelt in each person, he did not favor tolerance for Catholicism, atheism, or behavior outside the accepted norms of the day. Moreover, he never provided Pennsylvanians with a clear plan for implementing his vision. Hence, over the course of the eighteenth century they had to work out the practical details for realizing his

dream. One key period for doing so came in the years before the Revolution; and, as shall be seen, the *Centinel* played a key role in exploring what liberty meant in an age of British imperialism. Complicating matters was the fact that wave after wave of immigrants had to learn the benefits of living in a tolerant, pluralistic society that was fast developing a culture that was "an amalgam of different peoples, faiths, and ideas." It typically took a new group about a decade to assimilate.<sup>19</sup> The Quaker Party, in turn, was able to maintain political control in Pennsylvania at the time in good measure because the different groups believed that it least threatened their own interests.<sup>20</sup>

Although William Penn invariably thought in terms of European Americans, when he spoke of liberty and freedom of conscience, it was nonetheless Middle Colony Quakers, who eventually led the way in advocating a more expansive vision.<sup>21</sup> After a long internal struggle the Society of Friends concluded that African Americans shared the Inner Light and that slavery was thus morally wrong. The slave trade and slavery required the application of force, which violated the Quaker peace testimony. The spirit of liberty that swept over the Middle Colonies before and after the Revolution ultimately led other Americans to reject human bondage. However, not all Middle Colonists agreed or, even if they did, would sacrifice their property in slaves in the name of liberty. The Dutch in Kings County, New York, for example, became Loyalists in the Revolution to protect the institution of slavery. Many of these people continued strong in their opposition to emancipation until the state finally abolished slavery in the 1820s.<sup>22</sup>

British imperialism, too, stirred thoughts about liberty. A Philadelphian noted that "a Party has lately arisen in *England*, who, under Colour of the superintending Authority of Parliament are laboring to erect a new Sovereignty over the Colonies with Power inconsistent with Liberty or Freedom. The first Exertion of this Power was displayed in the odious Stamp Act."<sup>23</sup> Another Pennsylvanian marveled that the British oppressors "little imagined, that such a spirit of liberty existed in America . . . that men would have been found ready to venture their lives and fortunes, in defense of . . . their just rights, that they might transmit to their posterity, the liberty that they had received from their ancestors."<sup>24</sup>

Most of the people, who wrote about liberty in the public print, surely belonged to the better sort, but it is clear, too, that common people participated in the discussion, for the amount of material being published was expanding rapidly to meet popular demand. In 1763, for example, there were twenty-one newspapers in the colonies, with an average circulation of about six hundred. By 1775 the number had climbed to forty-two, thirteen

of which were published in the Middle Colonies; eight in Pennsylvania, and five in New York. Some papers appeared more than once a week. Circulation normally ranged from seven hundred to thirty-six hundred copies, with an average of about fifteen hundred.<sup>25</sup> These readership numbers, however, do not accurately convey the extent of their influence, for newspapers were distributed to coffee houses and taverns, where they were sometimes read aloud to patrons.<sup>26</sup> The actions of the people out-of-doors in the years leading up to the Revolution also indicate that Middle Colonists of the common sort cared deeply about the issues being debated. For example, on October 5, 1765, several thousand Philadelphians met at the State House to determine how best to block enforcement of the Stamp Act, which most British Americans believed threatened liberty and property. On October 31, 1765, the day before the stamp tax was to take effect, a crowd of about two thousand New Yorkers threatened to attack Fort George on the tip of Manhattan Island; several nights later five thousand residents oversaw the transfer of the city's seven boxes of stamps from the governor's control in the fort to the mayor's and aldermen's oversight at City Hall.<sup>27</sup>

Middle Colonists' understanding of the meaning of liberty evolved and deepened in the mid-eighteenth century as fresh challenges emerged. Under English common law, according to William Blackstone, liberty referred to an individual, who was "free from governmental interference."<sup>28</sup> In the 1750s, during the Anglican-Presbyterian quarrel over the religious affiliation of King's College, "Z" (probably New York's William Livingston) emphasized what the imperial and provincial governments could not do: "Such is the nature of our excellent Constitution . . . [that] the *Liberty of the Subject*, is secure and inviolable. How must it swell the Breast of every Briton . . . that his Person and Property are guarded by Laws, which the Sovereign himself cannot infringe." In 1765, during the Stamp Act crisis, a New Yorker focused instead upon what individuals could do: "All Men sprung from the same common Parent . . . and [are] all equally free. Every man has a right to do what he pleased, provided he did not injure others who had the same Rights as himself. This regard to the Rights of others was the only Boundary to the right of each particular. Whatever anyone acquired, without Injury to others, was his own Property; which none has a Right to take from him."<sup>29</sup> In April 1768 "The American Whig" (probably William Livingston) declared: "I am utterly opposed to the irrational and execrable practice of punishing people for opinions in no degree harmful to civil society."<sup>30</sup> In short, Middle Colonists had the right to think, write, and act upon their thoughts.

A similar shift in emphasis regarding religious liberty emerged in this period and can be ably documented in the struggle over whether an Episcopal bishop should be sent to America. It was an issue in which New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians were mutually involved and that John Adams believed “contributed . . . as much as any other cause to arouse the attention . . . of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of Parliament over the colonies.”<sup>31</sup> In 1756 New York’s William Smith, a Presbyterian, had argued that most people favored “equal universal toleration of protestants, and [were] utterly averse to any kind of ecclesiastical establishment.” In 1768, during the dispute over the appointment of an Anglican bishop, participants on both sides embraced a bolder definition, one that moved beyond mere toleration. In 1768 the pro-bishop “Aristocles” argued for “the liberty every man ought to have, to think and act for himself, in matters of religion.”<sup>32</sup> “The Anatomist” (Reverend William Smith, the Anglican provost of the College of Philadelphia) contended that “the opponents of the Church have nothing to do with that mode of government and discipline which Episcopalians choose for themselves in America, unless some probability can be shewn . . . of its interfering with the rights of others.”<sup>33</sup> In 1770 a vigorous opponent of the plan (probably William Livingston, a Presbyterian) argued that “nothing can be more plain . . . than that persons of every denomination on earth, have without any *human authority*, a right to worship God . . . according to the dictates of their own consciences, provided privileges in this respect will not interfere with the civil or religious privileges of their fellow subjects.”<sup>34</sup>

In the *Centinel* series, published in Philadelphia, “A.B.” (John Dickinson, who opposed a bishop’s appointment) linked religious liberty to political liberty and colonial self-government: a few Anglican clergymen had no right to petition Parliament for a bishop, for “the making of Laws for internal Police, is essential to Liberty; that this Power is by the respective Charters, confirmed to the [colonial] Legislatures . . . and that the regulating or establishing of religious Denominations, is a Part of this internal Police: for any person therefore, to apply to any other than the Legislatures of the Colonies to which they belong, for an Establishment, or to other Public Support or Preference of their Sect, is very derogatory of the Authority of those Legislatures; injurious to the Rights and Liberties of Americans; and subversive of the Constitution of their Country.”<sup>35</sup> He reached this conclusion because he believed that “a people derive their Liberty from God” and “are supposed to be the best Judges of what will promote their own good, . . . it

is an established maxim, that no human Laws, can, or ought to bind them, unless made with their consent.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, the *Centinel* series, which began as part of the effort to quash the appointment of an American bishop, ultimately provided a “constitutional blueprint of the empire” that limited Parliament’s power to imperial matters and allowed each colony to have autonomy over local affairs.<sup>37</sup>

Of course, some Middle Colonists loathed this expansive view of religious and political liberty. Those who eventually became Loyalists in the Revolution emphasized “controlling or setting bounds to freedom,” not “maximizing individual freedom.”<sup>38</sup> In 1767, an anonymous Anglican minister argued that religious liberty “is not in doing or having the power to do anything, . . . but in a POWER UNCONTROULED BY THE INTERESTED DESIGNS OR INDISCREET ZEAL OF OUR FELLOW MORTALS, TO CHUSE AND TO ACT WELL UPON THE BEST INFORMATION WE CAN PROCURE. In whatever appears to us to be for the honor of God, the interest of truth, and the good of mankind.”<sup>39</sup> Thomas Bradbury Chandler, a New Jersey Anglican, who spearheaded the movement for a bishop, argued that people should “*be left unrestrained in the Exercise of their religious Principles, in so far as they are good Members of Society.*” It was “sufficient that Men *believe* the religious Systems they have adopted to be true, and that they hold no Doctrines that are inconsistent with the Safety of the State, to intitle them to a Toleration from the civil Government.” It is unclear how he, given the opportunity, might have used phrases like “*good Members of Society*” and “Safety of the State” to restrict an individual’s or a group’s liberty. For Chandler liberty had to be counterbalanced by authority or it would degenerate into licentiousness. As might be expected, he sided with the crown during the Revolution.<sup>40</sup> In 1769 “A Hermit in New Jersey,” poetically made the same point, while attacking those who opposed the Townshend Duties and failed to realize that “to be *bound by Law* is to be *free*”:

What is it to be free? Is it to fly  
From *all restraint*, distaining *every tie*  
That renders *man subordinate to man*?  
To will *whate’r we please*, and, if we can  
To *execute our will*? Then let the *Strong*  
Enslave the *weak*, let *right* give way to *wrong*,  
And, *as he can*, his neighbour each annoy,  
Till Liberty *herself* herself destroy!<sup>41</sup>

In 1775, an anonymous Loyalist declared that "as much liberty as is consistent with good order and government, is the right of subjects in common." However, "more liberty is destructive" and ends in "a spirit of licentiousness and insolence in the lower classes of the people, to say nothing of the higher." It "is in every view criminal and most commonly proves fatal."<sup>42</sup>

The debate in the Middle Colonies over the nature of liberty reverberated in Britain. In the mid 1770s John Wesley, a member of the Established Church and a founder of Methodism, argued that political power derived not from the people, but came down from God, through the government, to the people.<sup>43</sup> He consequently believed that "the greater share the people have in the Government, the less liberty, either civil or religious, does the nation in general enjoy. Accordingly, there is most liberty of all, civil and religious, under a limited monarchy; there is usually less under an aristocracy, and least of all under a democracy."<sup>44</sup> Elsewhere, he added: "What liberty do you [British Americans] want, either civil or religious? You had the very same liberty we have in England. I say, you had . . . [because] you have no liberty, civil or religious now, but what the Congress pleases you." He went on to deny the link most Americans saw between liberty and property, "for every Sovereign under heaven has a right to tax his subjects: that is, to grant their property, with or *without their consent*."<sup>45</sup>

In 1776, Richard Price, a dissenting minister and moral philosopher, offered an alternate view of liberty, one more satisfying to Middle Colonists:

By Physical Liberty I mean that principle of *Spontaneity*, or *Self-determination*, which constitutes us *Agents*; or which gives us a command over our actions, rendering them properly *ours*, and not the effect of the operation of any foreign cause. Moral Liberty is the power of following, in all circumstances, our own sense of right and wrong; or of acting in conformity to our reflecting and moral principles. Religious Liberty signifies the power of exercising, without molestation, that mode of religion which we think best; or of making the decisions of our own consciences, respecting religious truth, the rule of our conduct, and not any of the decisions of others. In like manner; Civil Liberty is the power of a *Civil Society* or *State* to govern itself by its own discretion; or by laws of its own making, without being subject to any foreign discretion, or the imposition of any extraneous will or power.<sup>46</sup>



Unlike Wesley Price believed that “all civil government . . . is the creature of the people. It originates with them. It is conducted under their direction; and has in view nothing but their happiness.”<sup>47</sup>

Given the controversy over the nature of liberty on both sides of the Atlantic, it is understandable that Middle Colonists could redefine the concept to meet evolving circumstances or to advance one’s own cause. Liberty meant different things to colonial seamen, but during shore leave it sometimes connoted nothing more than the “unlimited indulgence of appetite.”<sup>48</sup> Other Middle Colonists could be as superficial. In 1761 a telling comment appeared in the *New York Gazette*: “A Squeeze of the Hand of a great man . . . a little facetious Chat in a strain of Freedom and Equality, have been sufficient to win the Heart of many a voter.”<sup>49</sup> During the Stamp Act crisis the word liberty appeared in multiple slogans that people interpreted differently: “Liberty, Property, and No Stamps,” “George 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pitt—and Liberty,” and “King and Liberty.” In 1768–1769 Middle Colonists opposed to the appointment of an Anglican bishop argued that having one foisted upon them would violate their civil and religious liberties. Of course, those demanding a bishop believed that being denied one breached their liberties.<sup>50</sup>

In 1766 land rioters in the Hudson Valley claimed kinship with New York City’s Liberty Boys to justify their right to land already granted (sometimes fraudulently) to wealthy, politically well-connected New Yorkers. The latter group, however, condemned the former for abusing liberty and for being “pretended” Sons of Liberty: “Liberty as [the land rioters] . . . conceive it, is an Exemption from the Payment of Debts and Rents, and a Discharge from the Obligation of all Contracts.” For Isaac Sears and the New York City Liberty Boys, who had rallied against the stamp tax with the slogan “Liberty, Property, and No Stamps,” liberty was a charade unless an individual’s right to acquire and hold property was guaranteed. As Philadelphia’s “Rusticus” argued in 1768, “None can the Bliss of Liberty ensure, /But such who may their *Property* secure.” The rioters’ alternate vision entailed communities of freeholders, not of tenant farmers. They saw liberty as entitlement without recognizing their obligation to respect the property of others. They were not alone. In 1769 “Liberty,” who lived in New Jersey’s Monmouth County and who favored closing the local courts to assist debtors, entitled his pamphlet *Liberty and property, without oppression*. Tellingly, many residents of that area had been engaged since the 1740s in a dispute over land titles with the East Jersey proprietors.<sup>51</sup>

Talk about liberty could become belligerent. On September 21, 1765 "Philo Patriae" argued, "If the English parliament can lay these burdens [the stamp tax] upon us, they can also, if they please, take our whole property from us, and order us to be sold for slaves, or put to death." He thought it "better to die in defense of our rights, than to leave such a state as this to the generations that succeed it."<sup>52</sup> On October 31 "A Freeman" threatened violence to anyone endeavoring to enforce the Stamp Act.<sup>53</sup> Immediately thereafter, Captain Archibald Kennedy received a note, warning him not to take the stamps for New York aboard his naval vessel or his property in town would be destroyed.<sup>54</sup> In February 1766 "Philodemos" declared "it very plain, that we don't so tamely submit to encroachments upon our Liberties"; he then threatened rebellion.<sup>55</sup>

Liberty could be infectious. In November 1765 Hermanus Meyer, a Dutch Reformed minister in New York, embraced liberty in his struggle against the Classis in Amsterdam, an ocean away, so that he could declare his independence from old-world dominion. In April 1766 the Classis of Amsterdam, in turn, criticized Meyer for selfishly promoting his own rights to the detriment of the church's common good.<sup>56</sup> In 1768 during the crisis over the Townshend Acts "Philander" rejoiced that "the spirit of liberty spreads from place to place" in Pennsylvania.<sup>57</sup>

Embracing liberty could be energizing, even liberating. In June 1765 "Freeman" insisted that New Yorkers should assert their independence if Britain failed to respect their natural rights.<sup>58</sup> On December 12 a pamphleteer argued that the British constitution procured "Liberty of Conscience, the peaceful Possession of Property and a Method of obtaining Justice with Security." In June 1766 James Parker wrote Benjamin Franklin: "I am sorry to find the bulk of the People still disputing the Authority from home. They think and find the Parliament have given Way in one Affair of Grievance, they begin to imagine both the Post-Office and Custom-House are like Grievances."<sup>59</sup> That same month Sir William Johnson complained: "I see plainly how it is now throughout y<sup>e</sup> Continent. People expect to do now as they please."<sup>60</sup>

The observations of those who loathed the rage for liberty underscored the latent long-term implications inherent in what many Middle Colonists were arguing: independence, republicanism, and even democracy. In September 1765 the British commander-in-chief General Thomas Gage wrote from New York City about those demanding the Stamp Act's repeal, calling them "a Set of People Educated in the Seminary's of Democracy, who take

every Opportunity to disturb the minds of the People, to Alienate their Affections from the Government, and to Spread and inculcate their pernicious Principles.”<sup>61</sup> In January 1766 the future Pennsylvania Loyalist Joseph Galloway argued that the conflict’s prime cause was the colonial craving for independence. In February John Hughes, Pennsylvania’s stamp officer, informed the Stamp Commissioners in Britain that the American Liberty Boys fancied “a Republican form of Government.” “That cursed Spirit [of Liberty] daily gaining Ground here.”<sup>62</sup> Sir Henry Moore, New York’s royal governor, grumbled about the “Leveling principles” that were so popular; too many people were confusing liberty with licentiousness and clandestinely promoting republicanism over balanced government.<sup>63</sup> Thomas Penn, the chief Pennsylvania proprietor, feared the colonists aimed to throw off all dependence.<sup>64</sup> James Parker the newspaper editor groaned: “The Spirit of Independence is too prevalent.”<sup>65</sup> “Horatio” called them “foul-mouthed republicans.”<sup>66</sup>

Liberty could paradoxically bring out the best and worst in people.<sup>67</sup> It wonderfully expressed itself in a genuine respect for the individual, but it also manifested itself, when unrestrained, in the enslavement of African Americans for their labor and in the ethnic cleansing and murder of Native Americans for their land.<sup>68</sup> It encouraged ordinary men to participate in the political process, yet in the Middle Colonies it was antiauthoritarian and considered government, whether imperial or local, an intrusive force.<sup>69</sup> Pennsylvania’s Scots-Irish demanded their rights as “freeborn Britons,” while simultaneously seeking to expropriate Native American land and to limit the imperial and provincial governments’ authority over them.<sup>70</sup> It expressed itself in Civic Quakerism and Quaker egalitarianism, but it was present, too, in the destruction of Major Thomas James’s home during the New York City Stamp Act riots.<sup>71</sup> It could be a creative force, as it was in 1765, when the New York Assembly passionately outlined its arguments against the stamp tax. Yet it could be destructive, as it was when the Paxton Boys murdered twenty Conestoga Indians in December 1763.

Although Middle Colonists genuinely loved their king, they cherished liberty more.<sup>72</sup> The fact that they once again celebrated the Stamp Act’s repeal on the king’s birthday in June 1766 makes that manifest. Participants were sincerely honoring George III, but they were using his birthday, too, as a pretext to revere liberty and revile the stamp tax. Residents of Woodbridge, New Jersey, feasted at the “handsomely decorated” “Liberty Oak.” After night-fall they built a large bonfire near the “ancient tree” and drank toasts not only

to George III, but to "Pitt and Freedom," to "All those who distinguished themselves to obtain the Repeal of the Stamp Act," to "America's Friends in Great Britain," to "the Sons of Liberty in America," and to "Liberty of the Press."<sup>73</sup> Philadelphians toasted "a Perpetual Union between Great-Britain and her Colonies." They likewise signaled the type of union they craved, when they celebrated William Pitt; Benjamin Franklin; the London Committee of Merchants; "America's Friends" on both sides of the Atlantic; the Pennsylvania Assembly and "all the other Assemblies, who have the true Interest of the Colonies at Heart"; "Trade and Navigation"; and "Liberty of the Press."<sup>74</sup> New Yorkers were even more effusive: "May the Whig Principles ever prevail throughout the British Empire"; and "May Tory Principles, and their Abettors be ever the Contempt of all good Men."<sup>75</sup>

A brief comparison with New England underscores how Middle Colonists had fashioned their own distinctive perception of liberty. Because of the pressures of a growing population on rocky depleted soil, the New England economy was suffering. However, Pennsylvania was "a veritable paradise and refuge from oppression"; commentators called it 'the best poor man's country in the world.'" In 1774 per capita wealth in New England was £38.2; in the Middle Colonies, £44.1, a 15.4 percent difference.<sup>76</sup> Philadelphia had already surpassed Boston in trade and population and had emerged as the cultural hub and the center of Protestantism for the thirteen colonies. In terms of population and economic growth, New York City was following in Philadelphia's footsteps, not Boston's.<sup>77</sup>

New England, although diverse, was also much more homogenous than the Middle Colonies. Of the 97.4 percent of the New England population that was European American, probably over 80 percent could trace their heritage back to England. For the Middle Colonies the number was closer to 44 percent.<sup>78</sup> Roughly 75 percent of New England churchgoers were Congregationalists. In the Middle Colonies, Presbyterianism was the largest denomination, but it constituted only about 21 percent of the congregations worshipping in the four colonies. As a result, according to James A. Henretta, unlike the Middle Colonies, New England was marked by a "relative uniformity of thought" and was "a model of the consensus made possible by homogeneity."<sup>79</sup> Stephen L. Longenecker drew the same conclusion: the Middle Colonies' ethnic diversity resulted in religious toleration, whereas New England, "a region of little ethnic variety," "treasured conformity."<sup>80</sup>

New Englanders consequently responded differently to change than did Middle Colonists. In the Great Awakening in New England Jonathan Edwards's

message was pessimistic. In *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* he argued that humans “hang [above hell] by a slender Thread, with the Flames of Divine Wrath flashing about it, and ready every Moment to singe it, and burn it asunder”; there was “nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one Moment.” In the Middle Colonies Theodore Frelinghuysen and the Tennant family set a much more optimistic tone, emphasizing a forgiving deity, not a wrathful God. Although the Awakening fostered liberty and individualism, New England’s greater “uniformity of thought” provided a check to these two forces that was absent in the Middle Colonies. As a result, the movement toward sectarian diversity and religious liberty developed more slowly in New England than in the Middle Colonies.<sup>81</sup>

The two regions also reacted differently to the Revolution. Robert Gross’s description of Concord, Massachusetts, is telling: “Concord was a declining town facing a grim future of increasing poverty, economic stagnation, and even depopulation.” Its people “were already buffeted by a world of unstoppable social and economic change. Now, with passage of the Intolerable Acts (1774), they were losing control of their political lives as well.” They thus decided “to defend their traditional community life” by becoming revolutionaries.<sup>82</sup> The residents of Malden, Massachusetts, likewise supported independence because of “the contagion of venality and dissipation” that was spreading from London to the American colonies and destroying the world they cherished.<sup>83</sup>

The reaction of Middle Colonists was much more varied, complicated, and future oriented. If New England Patriots typically treasured a world that was vanishing, their counterparts in the Middle Colonies focused more on the one they were creating. The “American Whig” declared in 1768 that “the day dawns in which the foundation of this mighty empire is to be laid, by the establishment of a *regular American constitution*.” Indeed, “there is no contending with Omnipotence, and the *predispositions* are so numerous, and so well adapted to the rise of America, that our success is indisputable.”<sup>84</sup> Moreover, because religion and ethnicity played so significant a role in determining loyalty, the Middle Colonies never responded with the same unanimity that New England did to British imperialism; Loyalists and neutrals were more numerous and influential in the former than in the latter.<sup>85</sup> By the middle of May 1776 only four colonies had not agreed to American independence; three were from the Middle Colonies: New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.<sup>86</sup>

Regional differences can be seen, too, by comparing Samuel and John Adams, Patriot leaders in Boston, with their New York City counterpart, Isaac Sears. Samuel like his relative John Adams was the archetypal Real Whig, who clung to the past and acted on the principle that people must sacrifice their self-interest for the common good. He did not seem to grasp that his call for a republic of virtue (or self-sacrifice) might conflict with his belief in individual liberty. In 1776 John Adams wrote that “the happiness of society is the end of government.” Indeed, “all sober enquiries after truth, ancient and modern, Pagan and Christian, have declared that the happiness of man, as well as his dignity consists in virtue.” On the other hand, Sears, a self-made man and former privateer, cherished political and economic individualism, which he believed would create a world of opportunity. Government existed to protect his rights, not the common good. He opposed British policy mostly out of economic self-interest; liberty entailed the right to engage in business with the least possible government interference. As Pauline Maier has explained, “For Sears and the New Yorkers there was no necessary conflict of public and private ends.” Indeed, “the revolution promised to give far more than it asked, and its rewards would be of a material as well as a spiritual sort. Liberty was good business.”<sup>87</sup>

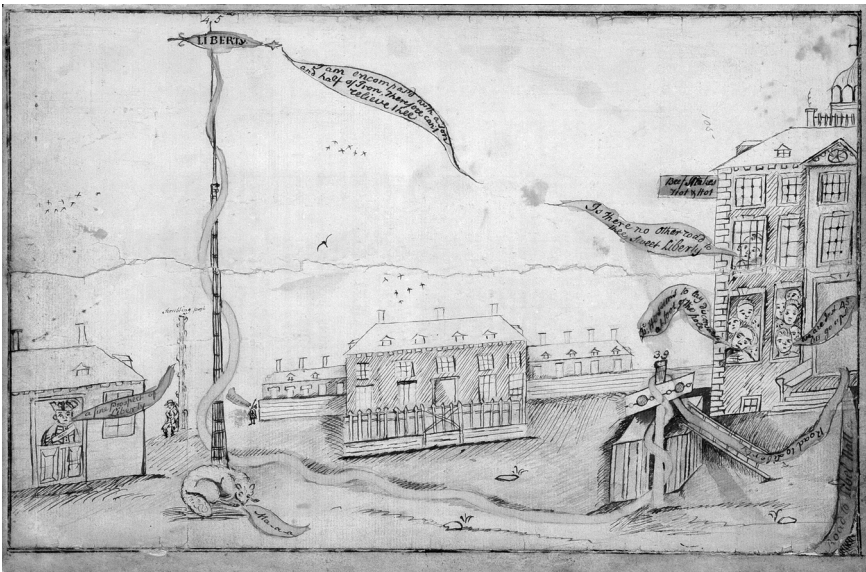


FIGURE 1: Raising the Liberty Pole in New York City, ca 1770. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

David Hackett Fischer's perceptive comparison of Boston's Liberty Tree and New York's Liberty Pole also underscores these regional differences. The former's deeply penetrating roots embodied an "organic idea of liberty and freedom as something that belonged to a tightly knit community." New York's rootless Liberty Pole mirrored the city's diverse population, whose "strongest bond was a common desire for liberty to keep their own customs, to worship in their own way, and to be secure in their property." The Liberty Pole envisioned a diverse community that cherished individual autonomy and respected the rights of others. In short, liberty had a more individualistic, optimistic, opportunistic, and future-oriented quality to it than in New England.<sup>88</sup>

## 2. The Ambiance of Violence

The rage for liberty evolved and came to fruition in an ambiance of violence, one that expected, tolerated, and even condoned physical force, when an individual's or a group's rights or self-interest were at stake. Although violence was liberty's nemesis, it was, paradoxically, also its collaborator. If violence could be used to advance one's self-interest, surely it could be employed to defend and promote liberty.

The fact that Middle Colonists lived in a violent environment is palpable. Alan Tully has argued that eighteenth-century New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians were inured to low-level violence. According to Bernard Bailyn, the Middle Colonies were "the scene of continuous contention." They were "a strange disorderly world . . . Lacking anything like a uniform land system; lacking social cohesion; and chaotic in public affairs." Although Bailyn thought that "the worst struggle was in New York City," Thomas Slaughter has argued that "the incidence of interpersonal violence was as great in the [New York] countryside as in the city, and authorities were challenged by force of arms even more frequently in rural than urban environs."<sup>89</sup> Julius Goebel and T. Raymond Naughton have shown that provincial New York was marked by a nearly continuous state of riot in the years after 1763. Douglas Greenberg has concluded that from 1731 to 1737 and again from 1756 to 1771 crime grew faster in the province than did its population. Moreover, violent crime played a much more important role from 1756 to 1776 than at any time before 1750. Immigration, geographic mobility, economic dislocation, and the presence of British soldiers were primarily responsible.<sup>90</sup> In *Troubled Experiment: Crime and Justice in Pennsylvania*, Jack



D. Marietta and G. S. Rowe discussed the crime and “persistent violence” that plagued that Quaker province in the eighteenth century. Violent crimes, a “hallmark of Pennsylvania society,” outnumbered all other forms of criminality. Immigrants, transient immigrants, indentured servants, and the Scots-Irish were the chief culprits.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, “arguments, fisticuffs, and other forms of violence” were persistent among the Scots-Irish. As the number of immigrants increased, so too did the number of crimes and the denunciations of these foreigners.<sup>92</sup>

Middle Colony violence was so diverse, so eclectic, that it is impossible to categorize it with an unambiguous phrase like “class warfare,” “religious discord,” or “ethnic strife.” The Great Awakening, the commercial and consumer revolutions, the strengthening of political individualism, immigration, geographic mobility, British imperialism, and the postwar economic depression in the early 1760s together ushered in a torrent of change and challenged traditional values and beliefs in a very heterogeneous region. Left adrift, individuals and groups used violence to restore order, to protect their own interests, or to gain advantage. In sum, the transition from a hierarchic to a republican society was not an orderly one. If liberty was contagious, so too was violence. In this environment, for example, as the Scots-Irish on the frontier moved from communalism to individualism, government officials in Pennsylvania bemoaned the group’s ungovernableness. The provincial elite in Philadelphia considered the Scots-Irish to be “mad and bloody” and “of all savages the most brutish.” Criminality was rampant among them, and they accorded little respect to the civil authorities or the property rights of others.<sup>93</sup>

Violence was learned and perpetuated by Middle Colonists in many ways: from child-rearing patterns; the ordeals of everyday life, including the hunting and slaughtering of animals; experiencing the horrors of slavery; militia training and the wartime militarization of American society; westward expansion and frontier experiences; the violent traditions of the British borderlands; the urge to survive during sharp economic downturns; the rage for liberty; and ethnic, religious, and economic conflicts.<sup>94</sup> If the push toward conformity and consensus in the more homogenous New England dampened the level of violence *within* (although not in the quest for land outside) that region, the heterogeneity of the Middle Colonies made the situation there much more volatile. Unlike the towns of New England, the communities of the Middle Colonies could not be called *Peaceable Kingdoms*.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, “the community through its courts was resigned, if not supportive, of using violent force as a method of discipline and as a form of recreation.”<sup>96</sup>



Bernard Bailyn has argued that “travelers at the [frontier] outposts at every stage . . . reported . . . scenes of drunken brawls involving whites, blacks, and Indians, at times an almost complete breakdown of normal civility.”<sup>97</sup> Alcohol often fueled the violence, but so too did other factors.<sup>98</sup> In 1735 Gilbert Tennent, a Presbyterian minister, preached upon *The necessity of religious violence in order to obtain durable happiness*.<sup>99</sup> Andy Doolen described New York City during the 1741 slave conspiracy as “a slave society, a culture of terror that defended white power at all costs.” In the event, eighteen African Americans and four European Americans were hanged; thirteen blacks were burned at the stake; and another seventy were sent to early deaths in the West Indies.<sup>100</sup>

Even the rage for liberty sometimes ended in the trampling of another’s rights. An apologia for the Paxton Boys blamed the murder of the Conestoga Indians on the Quakers in power for failing to protect frontier settlers: “Tho’ born to Liberty, and all the glorious Rights and Privileges of BRITISH SUBJECTS, they [the settlers] were denied Protection” and thus rose up “to maintain and defend their Lives and sacred Rights.”<sup>101</sup> The Paxton Boys, whose ancestors inhabited the British borderlands, still espoused that region’s belief in retributive justice and self sovereignty.<sup>102</sup> In sum, violence was an inescapable, endemic part of ordinary life that affected all: perpetrators, victims, and onlookers.

There were Middle Colonists, of course, who realized that violence could ultimately destroy liberty. Benjamin Franklin, for one, strongly condemned the Paxton Boy massacre and in a pamphlet repeated what the governor had argued earlier in a proclamation: “The Laws of the Land (upon the Preservation of which not only the Liberty and Security of every Individual, but the Being of the Government itself depend) require that the above Offenders should be brought condign Punishment.”<sup>103</sup> More importantly, following the Stamp Act riots, leaders in the various cities did their best to restore order in the name of liberty. In New York City, for example, prominent Whigs repeatedly urged residents to resist British tyranny without violence and to obey their extralegal leaders, whom the public had selected to advance their cause. In April 1775, when the radical Isaac Sears “with the Pride of a Dictator” sought to prevent the New York City polls from opening for the election of the new Committee of One Hundred, the outgoing Committee of Sixty reproved him, arguing that unity could be preserved only if “every Member of Society will consent to be governed by the Sense of the Majority, and join in having that Sense fairly and candidly ascertained.”<sup>104</sup> In November, immediately after Sears and about eighty volunteers acted without authority and destroyed James Rivington’s

printing press to keep him from spreading Loyalist propaganda, New York City's Committee of One Hundred protested to the New York Provincial Congress, and the Continental Congress subsequently refused to appoint Sears to a naval post already promised him.<sup>105</sup> Indiscriminate violence would lead not to liberty but to civil war and anarchy.

Although "interpersonal violence was commonplace in the eighteenth-century homes of laboring-class people and in the workplace," the elites,

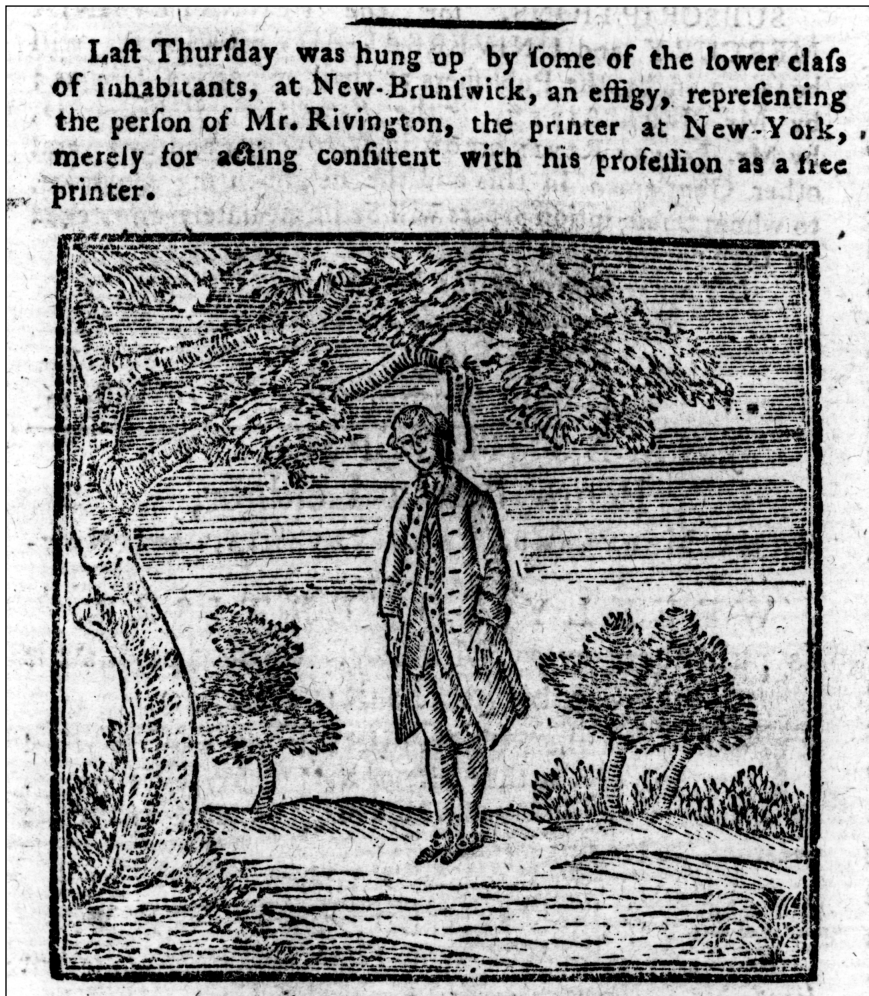


FIGURE 2: Rivington Hanged in Effigy, 1775. Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

too, were prone to violence, as the 1764 fist fight between Joseph Galloway and John Dickinson demonstrates.<sup>106</sup> Robert Ogden, Speaker of the New Jersey Assembly, challenged Thomas McKean of Delaware to a duel, after the latter had publicized the fact that the speaker had refused to sign the Stamp Act Congress's Declaration of Rights and had then attempted to conceal that fact from the people of his province. In 1769 Philip Schuyler and Jacob Walton agreed to a duel to settle a dispute they were having in the New York Assembly; at the last moment they courteously resolved their differences.<sup>107</sup> Some eighteenth-century Americans actually considered dueling to be a "civilizing agent."<sup>108</sup> Governor John Penn and the Proprietary Party, in turn, exploited the Stamp-Act violence to gain political advantage for themselves and to embarrass the Quaker Party, which had refused to condemn the tax for fear Pennsylvania would be denied a royal charter.<sup>109</sup>

Violence was so widespread that it is possible to offer only a broad overview of the different types of such behavior. Of course, every incidence of brutality did not by itself enhance the rage for liberty. However, together these episodes inured residents to further acts of belligerence, helped make violence more prevalent, and made it easier for people to use physical force in the name of liberty. As already indicated, interpersonal violence was endemic. The crime could be familial. In 1760 John Lewis was executed in Chester, Pennsylvania for murdering his wife. In 1762 a servant girl abandoned her child in the garret of a New York City home; the child died, and the mother was charged with murder. In May 1765 Godfried Swan, a New York tailor, cut the throat of his three-month-old child "from ear to ear."<sup>110</sup> In December an African-American female was hanged in New Jersey, for murdering her mulatto child. In February 1766 a female infant was found dead in a Philadelphia cellar. The same month two men entered Major Thomas James's abandoned home, which a mob had gutted during the Stamp Act riots. They found a pillow case stuffed with a newborn infant, who had been strangled to death.<sup>111</sup> If familial violence made societal violence more palatable, the latter also excused and inflated the former.

Other regions obviously experienced violence, but it is impossible to develop a metric comparing the amount and severity of the violence in different places. However, given the significant levels of immigration and geographic mobility in the Middle Colonies, a strong case can be made that violence was more prevalent there than elsewhere in British North America. Tellingly, New York City had the highest rate of alcohol consumption in

the colonies, and imbibing was a prime cause of violence. Middle Colonists also faced Native American warfare on the frontier and challenges from Southerners and New Englanders to territory they claimed. Slavery certainly made the South a very violent place, but that institution and its concomitant brutality was present, too, in the Middle Colonies, even if to a lesser extent.<sup>112</sup>

Under these brutal circumstances verbal aggression seeped into the political discourse, signifying how much violence had become entwined in the political culture. In May 1764, during the crisis that followed the Paxton Boys' murderous rampage in December 1763, Charles Pettit of Pennsylvania spoke of how "violent" the rage of party had become.<sup>113</sup> Three months later Isaac Hunt called the colony's Presbyterians "Piss-Brute-tarians" and argued that Thomas Penn "would rather see a general Massacre of all the Inhabitants . . . than suffer one of his calves to be taxed towards protecting them from a foreign force."<sup>114</sup> In February 1765 an anonymous pamphleteer, surely a Presbyterian, sentenced "Swaggering John," the Reverend William Smith, the College of Philadelphia's provost, to be put in the pillory, where "you are to carry your Excrements in your Breeches, unless you prove to be too Nauseous to the Nose of the common Hangman," until the king's pleasure be known. If the food allowed him caused diarrhea, "a Pen[n]" was to be placed under him to collect his feces.<sup>115</sup> In August 1768 a "Country Farmer" informed the public that "the Town-Carter" (Charles Thomson) had fertilized the fields of "our City-Farmer" (John Dickinson) with "filth and excrement."<sup>116</sup> In 1768 and 1769 New York Anglicans and Presbyterians berated one another in "Timothy Tickle's" "A Whip for the American Whig" and "Sir Isaac Foot's" "A Kick for the Whipper."<sup>117</sup> In 1776 Pennsylvania Whigs used "coercion, threats, and intimidation" rather than votes to destroy the power of the Quaker Party in the provincial Assembly.<sup>118</sup>

"Rusticus" accordingly called in February 1765 for an end to verbal abuse in politics and religion. In March "A.B." argued that "there is *no violence* that can be offered to mankind of a more *detrimental nature*, than that of being *publickly defamed*." Libeling public officials harmed "the *dignity* of the *state itself*" and caused "the widest breach in the fortress of liberty." The same year "Christian" condemned the "bitter rage amongst Parties" that was turning Pennsylvania into a "Desolate Wilderness."<sup>119</sup> In 1768 another writer objected that any candidate for office was "sure to be made the Object of Detraction and Slander. Every Calumny which the Art, Malice, Envy or Falsehood, his Enemies can invent, will be practiced to blacken his Reputation."<sup>120</sup>

Verbal violence sometimes turned physical. During the 1750 elections in York County, Pennsylvania, people divided into two factions—one Irish; the other German—and resorted to “Clubb law” to resolve their differences. In 1752 New York’s Governor George Clinton accused Oliver De Lancey, a prominent politician and a man of vicious disposition, of horsewhipping people into voting his way.<sup>121</sup> In 1755 a New Yorker complained that his opponents had sought to raise a mob after failing to disprove his arguments.<sup>122</sup> In September 1765 during a struggle between the Quaker and Proprietary parties Samuel Purviance warned Colonel James Burd that his people in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, should come “well armed” to the upcoming election.<sup>123</sup>

Violent interpersonal crimes at times had enormous political consequences. The infamous *Forsey v. Cunningham* case, which roiled New York’s political waters in 1764–1765 over the right to trial by jury, had its origins in a street brawl over a debt of one hundred fifty pounds sterling. In July 1763 Waddel Cunningham, a prominent local merchant had concealed a sword under his coat and attacked Thomas Forsey, another merchant, who owed him the money. The former chased and then beat the latter with the sword. Forsey defended himself, striking his assailant with a whip, so Cunningham stabbed him in the breast, piercing his lungs. A jury eventually awarded Forsey £1500 in damages. After the court refused Cunningham’s request for a new trial, he appealed his case to Acting Governor Cadwallader Colden. The latter’s decision to hear the appeal and thereby possibly to overturn a jury decision propelled New York into a fierce political and constitutional struggle on the eve of the Stamp Act crisis.<sup>124</sup>

Violence also marred relations between Native Americans and European Americans.<sup>125</sup> Murder was common, and both sides were culpable. In September 1763, during Pontiac’s Rebellion, eight Indians entered the home of John Fincher, a Quaker Stump and Ironcutter, near Reading, Pennsylvania, and slaughtered the man, his wife, and two sons.<sup>126</sup> The next month Indians killed three men in Berks County, Pennsylvania.<sup>127</sup> In July 1764 Native Americans “murdered, scalped, and otherwise most horribly abused” a pregnant women, “ripping her Belly open, and taking out her Child, which they left lying besides her.”<sup>128</sup> In September Indians were reportedly “sculking on the [Pennsylvania] frontier and murder[ing] every defenseless Person they can catch in an unguarded moment.”<sup>129</sup>

European Americans, in turn, killed numerous Native Americans, and authorities were often unable or unwilling to stop the carnage or to punish



the guilty.<sup>130</sup> In February 1765 Captain William Murray reported from Fort Pitt that a Native American had been murdered. In March General Thomas Gage declined responsibility, arguing that it was a criminal, not a military matter.<sup>131</sup> In June Alexander McKee wrote from Fort Pitt to Sir William Johnson, the Superintendent for Indian Affairs, that Indians and whites were slaughtering one another; three of the former and one of the latter had recently been killed.<sup>132</sup> In August Thomas Wharton informed Franklin of yet another murder, this time of an "Indian Lad," and complained of "The Conduct of these Wretched frontier Inhabitants."<sup>133</sup> In April 1766 Robert Simmonds killed and robbed two Oneida Indians near Minisink, New Jersey. Simmonds was placed in the county jail, but an armed mob freed him that same night.<sup>134</sup> The next month Gage informed London of that murder and yet another on the Pennsylvania frontier. Johnson, he said, was "utterly at a loss what to do," for "No Jury wou'd condemn them for murdering or ill treating an Indian."<sup>135</sup> In June Gage reported home that "Several Nations of Indians" had met at Fort Pitt, remonstrating "that Several of their People have been Murthered by the Inhabitants of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, besides three upon Ohio, and no Satisfaction given them." However, James Annin and James McKinsy were arrested for murdering two Indian women in Burlington County, New Jersey. Although they pleaded innocent, they were surprisingly found guilty and hanged.<sup>136</sup>

These acts of violence were not the most outrageous crimes perpetrated against Native Americans, as the transgressions of the Paxton Boys demonstrate. In December 1763 a shocked Governor John Penn condemned the group (most of whom were Scots-Irish or Germans from western Pennsylvania) as "a Number of People, armed, and mounted on Horseback, [who had] unlawfully assembled together, and [on December 14] went to the *Indian Town* in the *Conestoga* Manor, in *Lancaster* County, and without the least Reason or Provocation . . . [had] barbarously killed six of the *Indians* settled there, and burnt and destroyed all their Houses and Effects." Penn considered the raid "cruel and inhuman."<sup>137</sup> The Paxton Boys returned to Lancaster on December 27 and savagely murdered fourteen more Indians. They marched next on Philadelphia, but a delegation of that city's leading residents, including Franklin, persuaded them to disperse.<sup>138</sup> In the meantime, perhaps as many as two hundred Philadelphia Quakers violated their peace testimony and took up arms to resist the invaders. This development sorely tested the Society, which struggled with the issue for about two years before quietly deciding not to disown the large number who had refused to

renounce their violent behavior. Not even the Society of Friends could escape being tarnished by the ambiance of violence.<sup>139</sup>

Just as *Forsey v. Cunningham* had roiled New York, so the murder of the Conestoga Indians disrupted Pennsylvania politics. The Paxton Boys were rebelling not only against Native Americans because of frontier violence, but also against the Quakers, the Quaker Party, and eastern Pennsylvanians, who controlled the provincial government and had failed to protect frontier settlements. Over sixty pamphlets were published in the war of words that ensued. Benjamin Franklin, who headed the Quaker Party, opined that “the Blood of the Innocent will cry to Heaven for Vengeance.”<sup>140</sup> “A Lover of Truth” blamed the Presbyterian “Rage of *Enthusiasm*” for the “Massacre.”<sup>141</sup> Most important, Franklin used his *Narrative of the Late Massacres* to argue that the provincial government had indeed failed to protect the frontier and to give its inhabitants sufficient representation in the Assembly. Franklin blamed the proprietor for the slaughter and began a campaign to have the king make the province a royal colony.<sup>142</sup> Despite the outrage at the butchery one Philadelphian anxiously feared that 99 percent of Pennsylvanians supported the Paxton Boys.<sup>143</sup> In retrospect the group’s violence was “integral in the development of the image of the American frontier as a place where White men expressed their manhood through acts of violence against Native Americans.”<sup>144</sup>

The animosity frontier settlers had for Native Americans persisted. In March 1765, at Sideling Hill in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, James Smith and about one-hundred Black Boys, who were primarily Scots-Irish, attacked a packhorse train of Indian trading goods headed for Fort Pitt and destroyed property worth about three thousand pounds.<sup>145</sup> Already angered by the recent murder of several settlers, the group believed the shipment contained scalping knives and other war goods, and the frontiersmen were determined to prevent the delivery of all such goods until Pontiac’s Rebellion had officially ended. Smith argued that he had resorted to violence only after the leader of the wagon train had refused to halt so that the situation could be clarified.<sup>146</sup> The goods were actually part of a larger stock of items valued minimally at twenty thousand pounds and privately owned most likely by George Croghan, deputy superintendant of Indian Affairs; Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, a Philadelphia mercantile house; and two Indian traders, Robert Callender and Robert Field. The shipment was illegal under Pennsylvania law. However, to secure an official pass to ship the goods, Croghan had evidently pretended that the merchandise belonged to the crown.<sup>147</sup>

Lieutenant Charles Grant, who commanded at nearby Fort Loudon, sent out soldiers, who recovered some of the goods and arrested six rioters. Grant had not asked the civil authorities for permission to intervene. An observer feared "civil war."<sup>148</sup> Callender, who was a local justice of the peace and anxious about his remaining property, released the six on bail. The Black Boys next blockaded the fort and even captured Grant on May 19. He was released on May 29 on his written promise to return to the six men their weapons. After he broke the agreement, the Black Boys spent a day firing musket balls at the fort. To prevent the loss of life Grant refused to return the fire. In November Smith and about one hundred men again surrounded the fort, and Grant turned over the weapons. Gage was furious, but there was little he could do, for both sides had acted "entirely outside the channel of the civil law" and the Stamp Act crisis was already absorbing his full attention.<sup>149</sup> Not unexpectedly a grand jury refused to indict the six culprits.<sup>150</sup> Governor John Penn wrote to the Proprietor Thomas Penn that he would do all in his power to bring the guilty to justice, but he added that "I despair of Success, through the extreme weakness of our Government and the resolution of those desparate people, who it seems are determined at all events to oppose the authority of the Magistrates."<sup>151</sup> The frontiersmen saw matters differently. They believed the government had violated their liberty by not defending them against the Indians. The settlers consequently reasoned that they had the right to take matters into their own hands and to defend themselves against both the Indians and the government.<sup>152</sup>

Just as contacts between red and white Americans were treacherous, so too were land disputes among the latter. A common factor linking many of these incidents was New England imperialism. The push of an ever-expanding population against a finite supply of rocky, infertile soil led New Englanders to challenge the patents of Middle Colony land barons to their property. While European Americans were using violence to take Indian land, New Englanders were employing the same tactic to secure property in the Middle Colonies.<sup>153</sup>

One such struggle occurred in mid-eighteenth century New Jersey. The East Jersey proprietors claimed title to the territory between the Hudson and Delaware rivers based on a 1665 grant by the Duke of York, the future James II, to Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley. They were opposed by the descendants of three groups of settlers. First were Eastern Long Island Puritans, who had been granted the Elizabethtown Tract in 1664 by Colonel Richard Nichols, whom the Duke of York had appointed governor



of New York and New Jersey. The second group consisted of New England and Long Island Baptists and Quakers, to whom Nichols had issued a patent in 1665 for land south and east of Elizabethtown (roughly, present day Monmouth and Ocean counties). The third group was composed of New Englanders, who had settled around Newark in 1666 and purchased the land from local Indians in July 1667.<sup>154</sup>

The essence of the dispute is clear. According to Brendan McConville, “the proprietors sought to build a hierarchic society dominated by great landed estates.” Their opponents wanted to be freeholders possessing “their homesteads by virtue of nonproprietary titles.” The dispute was fought in the law courts, but it also resulted in sporadic outbreaks of violence. The situation was critical enough that in 1749 the Board of Trade considered sending a new governor and troops to restore order. Although affairs finally calmed down, violence resurfaced before the Revolution.<sup>155</sup> In 1769 and 1770, Monmouth and Essex counties experienced crowd actions against local lawyers. By the end of the disturbances, which were an outgrowth of the land disputes, participants had developed a new understanding of liberty: “They would . . . when necessary, reject the orderly and safe society that they had previously equated with liberty in favor of self-rule.”<sup>156</sup> As might be expected, the region’s non-proprietary residents were strongly pro-American during the Stamp Act crisis and at the outbreak of hostilities in 1775.

New Englanders and New Yorkers clashed over land in what eventually became the State of Vermont.<sup>157</sup> In November 1749 New Hampshire’s Governor Benning Wentworth informed New York’s Governor George Clinton that he planned to issue land grants in what he called western New Hampshire. He claimed his colony extended westward to where the Hudson and Mohawk rivers met. Clinton objected that the Connecticut River (New Hampshire’s present border) was the boundary line. In 1751 Wentworth alleged that his provincial boundary “extended . . . as far West as the Massachusetts have done theirs, that is, within twenty miles of Hudsons River” and issued a grant for the town of Bennington in present-day Vermont. During the French and Indian War (1754–1763), after the British had captured Ticonderoga and Crown Point in 1759, Wentworth issued New Hampshire land grants west of the Connecticut River but at least twenty miles east of the Hudson. By 1764 he had established 128 townships containing over three million acres of land. These grants conflicted with patents New York has issued in the same region.<sup>158</sup> New Hampshire ceased making such grants once the Board of Trade ruled in 1764 that the contested region was New York’s. Immediately after

the ruling New York declared Wentworth's grants void and issued new ones for the very same land.<sup>159</sup>

Violence soon broke out between the New York government and the settlers holding New Hampshire grants.<sup>160</sup> The latter were joined by a swell of fresh arrivals from New England. In 1766 Captain John Montresor, a British officer, noted: "They declare that possession is Eleven points in the Law and that they will take advantage of these [Stamp Act] Disturbances and as no law prevails at present will support themselves . . . as new England men."<sup>161</sup> In June 1771 Robert Cochran and an armed band that favored the New Hampshire grantees, violently dispossessed a New York patentee of his three hundred fifty acres, in what was known as the Argyle Patent; they then attacked several of his neighbors and burned down their homes.<sup>162</sup>

In 1770 Ethan Allen arrived from New England and began buying up the almost worthless New Hampshire land grants. By 1771 he had emerged as the leader of the Green Mountain Boys, who engaged in a nearly bloodless struggle to close the New York courts and establish the New England settlers' dominance over the region. By 1775 New York's authority in the area had been negated. However, at this point the Revolution began, and Allen turned his attention to capturing British-held Fort Ticonderoga. The conflict was not finally resolved until Vermont became a state in 1791.

Another area of contention was Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley, where present-day Scranton and Wilkes-Barre are located.<sup>163</sup> Again, disputed land titles were involved.<sup>164</sup> Charles II had granted the land to Connecticut in 1662 and to William Penn in 1681. In 1753 several prominent Connecticut residents organized the Susquehanna Company. In July 1754 company officials distributed liberal amounts of liquor and purchased about five million acres of land along the Susquehanna River from several Indian chiefs.<sup>165</sup> In 1755 Connecticut's government approved the area's settlement. In 1760 Pennsylvania authorities discovered that twenty Connecticut families had settled at Cushitunk on the west bank of the Delaware and that many more were on their way. Pennsylvania's Governor James Hamilton futilely issued a proclamation against the incursion, and Thomas Penn protested to Lord Halifax about Connecticut's "mad People."<sup>166</sup> By 1762 these settlers had cut a sixty mile path into the Susquehanna Valley and boasted that one thousand armed men would arrive the next spring with two cannons.<sup>167</sup> In December Penn informed Hamilton that General Jeffery Amherst, the British commander-in-chief, would surely use military forces to push the settlers out of Wyoming, but the government in London wavered until May 1763 about

taking such a drastic step. By that time Amherst was too busy handling Pontiac's Uprising.<sup>168</sup> A Delaware war party eventually accomplished what Penn and Amherst could not. In October 1763 the Indians killed ten settlers, roasting one of them; took a number as prisoners; and plundered their farms. The survivors returned to New England.<sup>169</sup>

Violence had a way of begetting more violence. It had been rangers from Paxton Township, who had discovered and buried the slaughtered New Englanders. The ghastly scenes these soldiers witnessed in Wyoming may partly explain the Paxton Boys massacre in December 1763. Moreover, Connecticut settlers returned in 1769 and established the town of Wilkes-Barre. They were joined by Lazarus Stewart, who had been a Paxton Boy and whose family had originally hailed from Ulster, and by several other Pennsylvania backcountry inhabitants, who were infuriated by the Penn family's land policies. The Pennsylvania government and the squatters remained at war from 1769 until August 1771, by which time the latter had established control over the region. However, the situation remained tense, for proprietary forces or Indians might return to the area at any moment. In 1775 fighting broke out again between the settlers and the government and continued into the Revolution. In 1778 Loyalists and Iroquois forces killed more than three hundred settlers at the Battle of Wyoming.<sup>170</sup>

Another burst of New England imperialism made itself felt in New York in the 1750s and again in 1766. The end of King George's War (1740–1748) led the Massachusetts government and "its land-hungry people" to expand westward into New York. The situation was ripe for exploitation. The boundary between the two provinces was in dispute. Wealthy New York landlords had used their political clout to grab huge tracts of land, most of which remained uncultivated. Their aim was to lease the land to tenants. As in New Jersey, the New Englanders wanted instead to own their own farms. The first wave of violence broke out on manors east of the Hudson River, near Massachusetts. New Englanders, not maltreated tenants, provided the leadership. The Livingston Manor upheavals started in 1751 and only died down in the winter of 1753–1754. A proclamation by Governor George Clinton in July 1753, ordering law enforcement officials in Albany and Dutchess counties to stop the mobbing, had taken the wind out of the protestors' sails. However, the turmoil moved northward to Claverack (or the Lower Manor of Rensselaerswyck) in 1754, and violence flared in 1755 and 1757. Peace was finally restored in August 1757 after news reached the colonies that the Board of Trade had set the boundary line between the two provinces twenty miles east of the Hudson

River. In the final analysis, although there had been little actual bloodshed, homes and fields had been destroyed, people had been kidnapped, and still others arrested.<sup>171</sup>

Peace was shattered once again during the Great Rebellion of 1766.<sup>172</sup> It was probably the New York government's impotence during the Stamp Act riots that tempted the discontented to challenge afresh the land titles of the great manor lords. The unrest had begun in 1765 on Philipse Highland Patent, when the proprietors enforced their claims to lands at the eastern end of the patent that bordered on Connecticut. Again the issue was conflicting land titles. By the spring of 1766 crowds of between one hundred and five hundred men were roaming the countryside, destroying crops, torching buildings, and fighting law-enforcement officials. The disturbances soon spread to the Manor of Cortland in Westchester County. After three Westchester rioters were arrested in April and jailed in New York City, their compatriots threatened to march on the city.<sup>173</sup> About five hundred, claiming to be Sons of Liberty, did so in May, and Governor Henry Moore asked General Gage for military assistance and issued a proclamation offering a reward for the capture of the ring leaders.<sup>174</sup> It was at this point that a New York City Liberty Boy condemned these "pretended" Sons of Liberty, for they coveted not liberty, but "an Exemption from the Payment of Debts and Rents, and a Discharge from the Obligation of all Contracts."<sup>175</sup> The city's Liberty Boys favored economic and political liberalism and had fought the Stamp Act with the slogan "Liberty, Property, and No Stamps."<sup>176</sup> The demonstrators consequently returned home, but the disturbances continued. In June, after hundreds of rioters gathered at the Poughkeepsie jail, Moore issued a proclamation ordering the arrest of William Prendergast and seven others for high treason. Because the militia could not "be depended upon," Gage sent 330 soldiers from the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment, in transit between Quebec and New York City, to assist local officials in restoring order in Dutchess County. Sixty rioters were arrested, and the situation in the county improved.<sup>177</sup>

The turmoil was not at an end, however. In June Livingston Manor and Claverack became the scene of violence. Gage now ordered Captain John Clarke and one hundred men from the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment to restore calm. Clarke tore down the homes of several protest leaders on Livingston Manor but soon found himself engaged in irregular warfare. Clarke's men tore down more houses and guarded the crops to keep them out of insurgent hands. At the trials which followed, most of the accused pleaded guilty to rioting. However, Prendergast was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death for high treason.

Although he received a reprieve until the king's pleasure was known, a mob assembled at the jail to free him, but he refused to go.<sup>178</sup> In December, at Governor Moore's request, George III pardoned Prendergast, and quiet returned to the region.<sup>179</sup>

The rioting in 1766 makes it clear that the British army had in the period following the French and Indian War become a "police force."<sup>180</sup> That transformation, the antics of the soldiers themselves, and the presence of British sailors unfortunately resulted in an upturn in civil-military tensions and violence. On January 15, 1764, at 11:00 p.m., New York City residents were awakened by the "Cry of fire." What had actually happened was that Major Robert Rogers, a prisoner in the New-Goal, had paid some fifteen soldiers to free him. About one hundred more were lurking in the shadows to help if needed. In the riot that followed, the jailer was wounded several times with a bayonet, several prisoners were abused, and everyone in jail escaped. Rogers fled on horseback.<sup>181</sup> In July 1766 Captain George Etherington and a party of regulars violently clashed in New Jersey with a justice of the peace and a Morris County posse over some recruits. One evening that same month several inebriated officers smashed a street lamp in New York City. When an innkeeper upbraided them, they wounded him with their swords. Escorted by two armed redcoats, the officers then proceeded down Broadway, demolishing street lamps along the way. When the city's watchmen overtook them, a scuffle ensued, and several in the watch were injured, two badly. One officer was arrested, but the others escaped. About a dozen soldiers, including those guarding the general's quarters, then marched to City Hall to free their jailed compatriot. Another melee ensued, and several more watchmen were hurt. The offending officers were finally apprehended the next day.<sup>182</sup> As the incident indicates, liquor was often a problem, and drunken soldiers could be vicious to anyone, whom they imagined had offended them. One night in 1766 a gang of redcoats forced their way into a poor cartman's abode. They "wounded him in a terrible Manner" and then visited a stable, where they hamstringed his horse, his "only Means" of "Subsistence." City magistrates repeatedly warned townspeople that the law forbade the sale of strong liquor to soldiers between sunset and sunrise, yet drinking, fighting, and crime continued.<sup>183</sup>

Although individual officers and soldiers could damage civil-military relations, there was a much larger problem. The very presence of the army and navy strained the relationship between the mother country and the people of the Middle Colonies. In January 1756, during the French and Indian War, Philadelphia tradesmen rioted because the British army was enlisting

servants into the military. From the tradesmen's perspective their liberty and property were being violated. Their servants had a contractual obligation to them for a stated number of years. The army's actions were consequently an "unconstitutional and arbitrary Invasions of [their] . . . Rights." The riot resulted in the arrest of several apprentices and soldiers and in the murder of a recruiting sergeant. Although the British government eventually recognized the validity of the tradesmen's argument, tensions remained high, and recruiting officers periodically suffered attack.<sup>184</sup>

Civil-military relations were strained, too, in Albany, New York, where three riots broke out in 1764. The residents' wartime hatred of impressment and the quartering of troops in private homes fueled the fires of discontent. In March a riot broke out between soldiers and civilians.<sup>185</sup> The situation remained tense, and in early July the townspeople "entirely Stripped the Guard house of every board" and attempted to pull down the King's Stable and to break into the Deputy Quartermaster's storehouse.<sup>186</sup> The mayor was informed but claimed he lacked enough guards to protect the buildings. Rioting broke out again in October, when Albany residents tore down the army barracks and pummeled a soldier within a whisker of death.<sup>187</sup>

Because New York City had the best harbor in British North America and was headquarters for the British army in America, civil-military relations were often troublesome. In July 1764, the armed sloop *Chaleur* impressed a man from each of five fishing vessels off the Long Island coast. The next morning a crowd seized and burned a barge belonging to the sloop's commander, who wisely released the five. Two residents were promptly arrested, but at a court hearing that afternoon the witnesses lost their memories, and a grand jury subsequently dismissed the charges.<sup>188</sup> On December 27 of the same year some British army officers barged uninvited into a dance assembly sponsored by members of the local elite and caused "a most dangerous riot." Governor Colden, although a stout supporter of the royal prerogative, protested vigorously to Gage: "It may tend greatly to lessen the Opinion, which the People of this Province justly entertain of their Security, in his Majesty's powerfull and determined Protection of their Rights and Liberty. It is no less incumbent on me to preserve the Privileges of the People than to Preserve the Prerogatives of the Crown." Gage felt Colden was being overdramatic, but the latter realized how volatile the situation was. He had personally antagonized the New York elite by his actions in *Forsey v. Cunningham*; and the British government had caused considerable discontent with its campaign against smuggling, the Revenue Act of 1764, and the proposed Stamp Act.<sup>189</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

In the final analysis, if scholars heed Wayne Bodle's admonition to view the Middle Colonies as "locuses of interactive behavior," it becomes clear that what unified the four in this period was their heterogeneity.<sup>190</sup> Middle Colonists did not have a shared identity; but they did have a common interest: asserting, protecting, and experiencing their own varied concepts of liberty. The lack of a single overarching theology and the abundance of economic opportunity, whether found in commerce or the ownership of land, had created a state of affairs where these people from so many varied backgrounds could realistically thirst for liberty.<sup>191</sup> Because they also lived in an ambience of violence, physical force served as a potent tool to secure and enhance their own or their group's liberty at the expense of others. As the imperial crises unfolded Middle Colonists would react to British imperialism in light of how they believed the government's actions affected their own liberty and their interests. Their responses to these challenges were consequently much more varied and complicated than those of the people of New England.

### NOTES

1. The author wishes to thank Patricia U. Bonomi, Edwin G. Burrows, Benjamin Carp, Owen Ireland, Alan Tully, Robert W. Venables, and Neil York for reading and commenting upon earlier drafts of this essay.
2. For the literature on the Middle Colonies, see Patricia U. Bonomi, "The Middle Colonies: Embryo of the New Political Order," in Alden T. Vaughan and George Athan Billias, eds., *Perspectives on Early American History: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Morris* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 63–92; Milton M. Klein, "New York in the American Colonies: A New Look," in Klein, ed., *The Politics of Diversity: Essays in the History of Colonial New York* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1974), 183–204; Klein, "Shaping the American Tradition: The Microcosm of Colonial New York," *New York History* 59 (April 1978): 172–97; Douglas Greenberg, "The Middle Colonies in Recent American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* (WMQ) 36 (July 1979): 396–427; Michael Zuckerman, "Introduction: Puritans, Cavaliers, and the Motley Middle," in Zuckerman, ed., *Friends and Neighbors: Group Life in America's First Plural Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 3–25; Robert J. Gough, "The Myth of the Middle Colonies," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (PMHB) 107 (July 1983): 393–420; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), chap. 6; Michael Zuckerman, "Farewell to the 'New England Paradigm' of Colonial Development," and Jack P. Greene, "Michael Zuckerman's Pursuit of Happiness: A Comment," *Pennsylvania History* (PH) 57 (January 1990): 66–78; Wayne Bodle,

- "The 'Myth of the Middle Colonies' Reconsidered: The Process of Regionalism in Early America," *PMHB* 113 (October 1989): 527–48; Wayne Bodle, "Themes and Directions in Middle Colonies Historiography, 1980–1994," *WMQ* 51 (July 1994): 355–88; and Wayne Bodle, "The Fabricated Region: On the Insufficiency of 'Colonies' for Understanding American Colonial History," *Early American Studies* 1 (Spring 2003): 1–27.
3. Religiously the Middle Colonies included Anglicans; Presbyterians; Dutch, German, and French Calvinists; German and Swedish Lutherans; Quakers; Moravians; Methodists; Dunkers; Mennonites; Schwenkfelders; Amish; Seventh-Day Adventists; Anabaptists; Baptists; Jews; and Catholics. Ethnically the region was as varied: African, African American, Native American, Dutch, Finnish, German, French, English, Palatine, Welsh, Scottish, Scots-Irish, Irish, Swedish, and Swiss. The Middle Colonies consequently "had a much larger proportion of non-English Europeans and their descendants" than did either New England or the South; see Russell R. Menard, "Was There a 'Middle Colonies Demographic Regime,'" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 132 (June 1989): 216.
  4. For Joseph Galloway's not unbiased discussion of the situation in Pennsylvania, see *The speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq; one of the members for Philadelphia County: in answer to the speech of John Dickinson, Esq; delivered in the . . . Assembly, of . . . Pennsylvania, May 24, 1764. On occasion of a petition . . . praying His Majesty for a royal, in lieu of a proprietary government* (Philadelphia, 1764), in *Early American Imprints, 1639–1800*, ed. American Antiquarian Society (New York: Readex, 1981–1982), no. 9671 (hereafter cited as EAI). For the Scots-Irish, see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689–1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 139. Alan Tully, *Forming American Politics: Ideals, Interests, and Institutions in Colonial New York and Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 336ff.
  5. Bodle, "'Myth of the Middle Colonies' Reconsidered," 527–48; the quote is from p. 548. For a recent effort in this direction, see Joseph S. Tiedemann, "Interconnected Communities: The Middle Colonies on the Eve of the American Revolution," *PH* 75 (Winter 2009): 1–41.
  6. For an important study of the meaning of liberty over time and among different regions and groups, see David Hackett Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strains of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), chap. 2; Donna Merwick, "Violence as a Trait in Colonial North American Culture," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 7 (July 1988): 40–51.
  7. To the Printer, *New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy* (WPB), November 14, 1765.
  8. John Philip Reid, *The Concept of Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 2.
  9. For discussions about how eighteenth-century and contemporary intellectuals have defined liberty, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), esp. p. 77; Jack P. Greene, "Review," in *Revolution, Confederation, and Constitution*, ed. Stuart Gerry Brown (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1971), 20–21; Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), esp. pp. 55–69, 77–83, 87–90; Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: the Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 18, 22;



- Reid, *The Concept of Liberty*; Robert H. Webking, *The American Revolution and the Politics of Liberty* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); J. C. D. Clark, *Language of Liberty, 1660–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gregory Molivas, “From Religion to Politics: The Expression of Opinion as the Common Ground between Religious Liberty and Political Participation in the Eighteenth-Century Conception of Natural Rights,” *History of Political Thought* 21 (Summer 2000), 237–60; and Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For the historiography of this issue, see Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom*, 1–15.
10. “Publicus” to Printer, *WPB*, October 17, 1765.
  11. “B.A.” to Printer, *WPB*, October 24, 1765.
  12. To the Printer, *Pennsylvania Journal*, November 28, 1765.
  13. “The Sentinel,” No. 14, *WPB*, May 30, 1765.
  14. “New York, June 30, 1766,” *New-York Mercury*, June 30, 1766, hereafter cited as *Mercury*.
  15. *A Manual of religious liberty* (New York, 1767), *EAI*, no. 10688, 31.
  16. Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Political Writings of John Dickinson, 1764–1774* (1895; New York: Da Capo, 1970), 372.
  17. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007), 15–34, 62; “A Freeman” to Printer, *WPB*, October 31, 1765; “Sentinel,” No. 14, *WPB*, May 30, 1765; *Considerations upon the rights of the colonists to the privileges of British subjects, introduc’d by a brief review of the rise and progress of English liberty, and concluded with some remarks upon our present alarming situation* (New-York, 1766), *EAI*, no. 10273; “Dialogue between a North American and a Courtier from the Public Ledger,” [*Mercury*], November 18, 1765; *A serious address to the inhabitants of New York. My dear countrymen and fellow citizens. As the British Constitution is of all others, confessedly calculated to procure whatever constitutes happiness, namely liberty of conscience* (New York, 1765), *EAI*, no. 10041; and “The American Whig,” No. XLVI, *WPB*, January 23, 1769. Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom*, 11; Bernard Friedman, “The Shaping the Radical Consciousness in Provincial New York,” *Journal of American History* 56 (March 1970): 781–801; Friedman, “Hugh Hughes,” *New York History* 64 (July 1983): 229–59; Bernard Bailyn, “1776, A Year of Challenge—A World Transformed,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 19 (January 1976): 446–47; James A. Henretta, *The Evolution of American Society, 1700–1815: An Interdisciplinary Analysis* (Lexington: D. C. Heath, 1973), 136; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 597–98, 603, 726, 777–78; Joyce Appleby, “The Social Origins of American Revolutionary Ideology,” *Journal of American History* 64 (March 1978): 935–58; Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 128; and Joseph S. Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: New York City and the Road to Independence, 1763–1776* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 39–41.
  18. Concerning self-interest, see Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 390, 391, 393, 397, 398, 404. For the role that Quakerism played in John Dickinson’s understanding of liberty, see Jane T. Calvert, “Liberty without Tumult: Understanding the Politics of John Dickinson,” *PMHB* 131 (July 2007), 233–62.
  19. This paragraph is based upon Sally Schwartz, “A Mixed Multitude:” *The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), esp. chap. 1; the first quote is

- on p. 296, and the second on p. 5. For the transformation of German Lutherans, see A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
20. William S. Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 194.
  21. Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613–1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 124–25, 162–63, 214; Gary Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), chap. 1.
  22. Edwin G. Burrows, "Kings County," in Joseph S. Tiedemann and Eugene R. Fingerhut, eds., *The Other New York: The American Revolution beyond New York City, 1763–1787* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 21–42.
  23. *The Following address was read at a meeting of the merchants, at the Lodge, in Philadelphia, on Monday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1768* (Philadelphia, 1768), EAI, no. 10896.
  24. *The Power and grandeur of Great-Britain, founded on the liberty of the colonies, and the mischiefs attending the taxing them by act of Parliament demonstrated* (Philadelphia, 1768), EAI, no. 11050, 7.
  25. Paul Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763–1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 225n3; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743–1776* (New York: Knopf, 1955), 185–88; 388–89; and Alan I. Marcus and Howard P. Segal, *Technology in America: A Brief History* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 24–25. Concerning newspaper circulation see also Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764–1776* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 303–304; Clarence Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), 19–22; and Tiedemann, "Interconnected Communities," 5–7.
  26. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Louis P. Masur (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993), 105; Wayne E. Fuller, *The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 24–25; Ruth Lapham Butler, *Doctor Franklin, Postmaster General* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, 1928), 56–58. See also *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan et al, 14 vols. (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921–1965), 350, for how far newspapers could travel.
  27. *Pennsylvania Journal*, October 10, 1765; Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 2, 78.
  28. Henry Paul Monaghan, "Of 'Liberty' and 'Property,'" *Cornell Law Review* 62 (March 1977): 412. Also see Kammen, *Spheres of Liberty: Changing Perceptions of Liberty in American Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 23–24.
  29. William Livingston and others, *The Independent Reflector or Weekly Essays on Sundry Important Subjects More Particularly adapted to the Province of New York*, ed. Milton M. Klein (Cambridge: 1963), 77; also see pp. 58, 306–18. To the Printer, WPB, November 14, 1765.
  30. *A Collection of tracts from the late news papers, &c. Containing particularly The American Whig, A whip for the American Whig, with some other pieces, on the subject of the residence of Protestant bishops in the American colonies, and in answer to the writers who opposed it*, vol. 1 (New York, 1768), EAI, no. 10857, 76.
  31. The Adams quote can be found in Nybakken, ed., *Centinel*, 7. Civil liberty and religious liberty were linked, according to Rev. John Witherspoon, for "there is not a single instance in history in

- which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire"; "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men" in John Witherspoon, *The Selected Writings of John Witherspoon*, ed. Thomas Miller (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 141.
32. The first quote is from John Webb Pratt, *Religion, Politics and Diversity: The Church-State Theme in New York History* (Ithaca: 1967), 67; the second from *Collection of tracts*, 1: 37.
  33. "The Antonomist" [No. XVII], December 29, 1768, in *A Collection of tracts from the late news papers, &c.*, vol. 2 (New York, 1769), EAI, no. 11212, 133.
  34. "Sir Isaac Foot," "A Kick for the Whipper," No. LXVII, WPB, January 22, 1770.
  35. "A.B.," *Centinel Number VII*, in Elizabeth I. Nybakken, ed., *The Centinel: Warnings of a Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980), 123.
  36. "A.B.," *Centinel Number VII*, in Nybakken, ed., *Centinel*, 120, 122.
  37. Nybakken, ed., *Centinel*, 72.
  38. Janice Potter, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 55.
  39. Anonymous, *A manual of religious liberty* ([London?]: Printed for Mr. Rivington in New York, 1767), 15.
  40. Thomas Bradbury Chandler, *The appeal defended: or, The proposed American episcopate vindicated, in answer to the objections and misrepresentations of Dr. Chauncy and others* (New York, 1769), EAI, no. 11203, 7, 15; also see p. 180. For liberty and authority, see Kammen, *Spheres of Liberty*, 18.
  41. "A Hermit in New Jersey" [Thomas Hopkinson], *Liberty, a poem, lately found in a bundle of papers, said to be written by a hermit in New-Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1769), EAI, no. 11296, 5, 6.
  42. "A Card," *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, Mar. 9, 1775.
  43. Timothy L. Wood, "'That They May Be Free Indeed': Liberty in the Early Methodist Thought of John Wesley and Francis Asbury," *Methodist History* 38 (Summer, 2000), 233.
  44. Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1958–1959), 11: 105.
  45. John Wesley, *A calm address to our American colonies* (Bristol, 1775), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale, Loyola Marymount University, April 20, 2009, 20–21. Also see Allan Raymond, "'I Fear God and Honour the King': John Wesley and the American Revolution," *Church History* 45 (September 1976), 316–28; Mark E. Hanshaw, "Wesley and Liberty: Embracing Poles," *Methodist History* 40 (October 2001), 51–60; and Leon O. Hynson, "From Revolution to Revolution," *Methodist History* 43 (July 2005), 245–57.
  46. Richard Price, *Observations on the nature of civil liberty the principles of government, and the justice and policy of the war with America . . .*, Eighth edition (Dublin, 1776), in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale, SCELCLoyola Marymount University, 4 May 2009, <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=Too1&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW3305622349&source=gale&userGroupName=loym48904&version=1.0&docLevel=FA SCIMILE>>, Gale Document Number: CW3305622349, 3–4.
  47. Price, *Observations on the nature of civil liberty*, 17.
  48. Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), xii.
  49. WPB, February 5, 1761.

50. *Collection of tracts*, 1: 14, 39, 69, 279.
51. Son of Liberty, *I congratulate my countrymen on the near and certain prospect of the repeal of the Stamp-Act, and hope that the disquiets . . . will now subside . . .* [New York, 1765], EAI, no. 41592; "Rusticus," *Liberty. A Poem* (Philadelphia, 1768), EAI, no. 11061, 14; and "Liberty," *Liberty and property, without oppression. As is set forth in sundry letters, directed to the public of the county of Monmouth, in the province of New-Jersey* (unk., 1769), EAI, no. 41951. Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom*, 8; Kammen, *Spheres of Liberty*, 24–25. For the link between liberty and the "security of property," see Reid, *The Concept of Liberty*, 5, and Webking, *The American Revolution and the Politics of Liberty*, 113. For the evolution of the relationship between liberty and property among German Lutherans, see Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*.
52. *The Constitutional Courant*, September 21, 1765.
53. "A Freeman" to Printer, *WPB*, October 31, 1765.
54. "Major James Thomas's [Thomas James's] Account of the Stamp Act Riots in New York City," Additional Manuscripts, no. 33030, British Museum, Great Britain; Donna J. Spindel, *The Stamp Act Riots* (Ph.D. diss: Duke University, 1975), 121; and Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 77.
55. "Philodemos" to Printer, *WPB*, March 13, 1766.
56. Classis of Amsterdam to Conferentie, April 7, 1766, in Hugh Hastings, ed., *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York*, 7 vols. (Albany, 1901–1916), 6: 4052.
57. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 12, 1768.
58. *WPB*, June 6, 1765.
59. James Parker to B. Franklin, June 11, 1766, in Benjamin Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 38 vols., ed. Leonard W. Labaree et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959–2006), 13: 308, hereafter cited as *Franklin Papers*.
60. Johnson to Gage, June 14, 1766 in William Johnson, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols., ed. James Sullivan (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1891–1962), 12: 104–106; hereafter cited as *Johnson Papers*.
61. Gage to Johnson, September 30, 1765, Thomas Gage Papers (American Series) [microfilm], vol. 43, William Clemens Library, Ann Arbor; hereafter cited as Gage Papers.
62. John Hughes to Stamp Commissioners, February 20, 1766, Treasury 1/452, Public Record Office, Great Britain.
63. Gov. Henry Moore to Lords of Trade, June 12, 1766, in E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parson, 1853–1887), 4: 830.
64. Thomas Penn to Mr. Chew, January 11, 1766, Thomas Penn Papers (microfilm), Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
65. James Parker to B. Franklin, June 11, 1766, in *Franklin Papers*, 13: 308.
66. "Horatio" to the Anatomist, the Anatomist [No. III], September 22, 1768, in *Collection of tracts*, 2: 11212, 22, 26.
67. Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom*, 8.
68. Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 364. Ben Kiernan has called the Paxton Boy Massacre a "genocidal massacre"; *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 246.

69. Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 336–38; Douglas Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York, 1691–1776* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 182–83. For one account of the link between antiauthoritarianism and the dissenting tradition in New England and the Middle Colonies, Leslee K. Gilbert, “The Alter of Liberty: Enlightened Dissent and the Dudleian Lectures, 1755–1765,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 31 (Summer 2003), 151–71, esp. p. 153.
70. Griffin, *People with No Name*, 6.
71. For Civic Quakerism and Quaker egalitarianism, see Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 287–96, 300, and 347.
72. See, for example, *Four dissertations, on the reciprocal advantages of a perpetual union between Great-Britain and her American colonies. Written for Mr. Sargent's prize-medal . . . at the public commencement in the College of Philadelphia, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1766* (Philadelphia, 1766), EAI, no. 10400. For a different interpretation, see Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
73. “Woodbridge [East Jersey], June 5,” *WPB*, June 19, 1766 (Supplement).
74. “Philadelphia, June 12,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 12, 1766.
75. “New York, June 5,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 12, 1766.
76. Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 82.
77. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentleman: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942); Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt*; Butler, *Becoming America*, 186; and Richard Hofstadter, *America at 1750: A Social Portrait* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 8. The quote is from James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographic Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (New York: Norton, 1972), xiii.
78. The numbers are based upon the tables in United States, Bureau of the Census, *The Statistical History of the United States from the Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford: Fairfield Publishers, 1965), 756. To determine the percentage of the population that was of English background, it was necessary to use data for 1790 and the percentages must therefore be considered rough estimates. The population of what would eventually become the State of Vermont was included in the figures for New England.
79. Butler, *Becoming America*, 191–92. The quote is from Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 114.
80. Stephen L. Longenecker, *Piety and Tolerance: Pennsylvania German Religion, 1700–1850* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994), xiii.
81. James A. Henretta and Gregory H. Nobles, *Evolution and Revolution: American Society, 1600–1820* (Lexington: D. C. Heath, 1987), 104, 106; Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 129, 131. Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the hands of an angry God. A sermon preached at Enfield, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1741. At a time of great awakenings; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers* (Boston, 1742), EAI, no. 4938, 15.
82. The quotes, in order, are from Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 74, 107, 133.
83. The quote is from Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 827.
84. *Collection of tracts*, 1:58.
85. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 128; 137.

86. John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 158; Benjamin L. Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 172, 206.
87. The John Adams quotes are from John Adams, *Thoughts on government: applicable to the present state of the American colonies. In a letter from a gentleman to his friend* (Boston, 1776), EAI, 14640, [4]. Pauline Maier, *The Old Revolutionaries: Political Lives in the Age of Samuel Adams* (New York: Knopf, 1980), 3–50, 51–100; the quotes are on pp. 99, 100. Webking, *The American Revolution and the Politics of Liberty*, 61–77, esp. p. 76, and Robert J. Christen, *King Sears: Politician and Patriot in a Decade of Revolution* (New York: Arno, 1982), 29–31.
88. The quotes are from Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom*, 32, 42. John Dickinson also linked liberty to trade, arguing that “trade and freedom are nearly related to each other”; John Dickinson, *Letters from a farmer in Pennsylvania, to the inhabitants of the British colonies* (Philadelphia, 1768), EAI, no. 10875, 24.
89. Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 362; Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 97, 98; and Thomas P. Slaughter, “Interpersonal Violence in a Rural Setting: Lancaster County in the Eighteenth Century,” *PH* 58 (April 1991): 98. Also see Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), chapters 1 and 2; and Brendan McConville, *These Daring Disturbers of the Public Peace: The Struggle for Property and Power in Early New Jersey* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).
90. Julius Goebel and T. Raymond Naughton, *Law Enforcement in Colonial New York: A Study in Criminal Procedure, 1664–1776* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1944), 86; Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement*, 42, 104, 107, 121, 136, 138, 142.
91. Jack D. Marietta and G. S. Rowe, *Troubled Experiment: Crime and Justice in Pennsylvania, 1682–1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), chap. 3, the quotes are from p. 107. Also see Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 306.
92. Marietta and Rowe, *Troubled Experiment*, 71; and Kevin L. Yeager, “The Power of Ethnicity: The Preservation of Scots-Irish Culture in the Eighteenth-Century American Backcountry” (Ph.D. diss.: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2002), 225. Henry Halbert, *The last speech and confession, of Henry Halbert, who was executed at Philadelphia, October 19, 1765, for the inhuman murder of the son of Jacob Woolman. To which is added, a letter from the criminal to the father of the murdered son* (Philadelphia, [1765]), EAI, no. 9996, provided a didactic autobiography of a German immigrant, who had become a convicted murderer.
93. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, chap. 4. Yeager, “Power of Ethnicity,” 213–17; the two quotes can be found on p. 215. For the impact of the commercial revolution on the Scots Irish, see *idem*, 154, 179–80.
94. See Slaughter, “Interpersonal Violence in a Rural Setting,” 98–123. The literature on the subject of eighteenth-century American violence is too large to cite here in full; for a start see Slaughter, “Crowds in Eighteenth-Century America: Reflections and New Directions,” *PMHB* 105 (January 1991): 3–34. For cities, see Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Paul A. Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763–1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Steven Rossworm, *Arms, Country, and Class: The*

- Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" during the American Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987). For the frontier, see Barbara Karsky, "Agrarian Radicalism in the Late Revolutionary Period," in Erich Angermann, Marie-Luise Frings, and Hermann Wellenreuther, eds., *New Wine in Old Skins: A Comparative View of Socio-Political Structures and Values Affecting the American Revolution* (Stuttgart, Ger.: Klett, 1976); Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Henretta and Nobles, *Evolution and Revolution*, 124. More generally, see the essays in Alfred F. Young, *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 128. For family violence, see Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Greven, *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Elizabeth Pleck, *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of American Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); John Demos, "Child Abuse in Context: An Historian's Perspective," in Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 68–91. For the British borderlands, see Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 621–22, 634, 687, 726, 765, 769, and 770.
95. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 114–15; Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Knopf, 1970). Of course, Boston was a key exception to this generalization; see Carp, *Rebels Rising*, chap. 1.
  96. Slaughter, "Interpersonal Violence," 116.
  97. Bailyn, *Peopling North America*, 117.
  98. Slaughter, "Interpersonal Violence," 116; Jessica Kross, "'If you will not drink with me, you must fight with me': The Sociology of Drinking in the Middle Colonies," *PH* 64 (Winter 1997): 28–55; Carp, *Rebels Rising*, 68.
  99. Gilbert Tennent, *The necessity of religious violence in order to obtain durable happiness. Open'd and urg'd in a sermon . . . Preach'd at Perth-Amboy, June 29, 1735* [New York, 1735], *EAI*, no. 3966.
  100. Andy Doolen, "Reading and Writing Terror," *American Literary History* 16 (Fall 2004): 77–78. For the slave conspiracy, see Thomas J. Davis, *A Rumor of Revolt: The "Great Negro Plot" in Colonial New York* (New York: Free Press, 1985); Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003); and Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Knopf, 2005).
  101. [Rev. Thomas Barton], *The conduct of the Paxton-men, impartially represented: with some remarks on the Narrative* (Philadelphia, 1764), *EAI*, no. 9594; the quotes are from p. 5.
  102. Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 765.
  103. B. Franklin, *A narrative of the late massacres, in Lancaster County, of a number of Indians, friends of this province, by persons unknown. With some observations on the same* (Philadelphia, 1764), *EAI*, no. 9667, 11.
  104. William Smith, *Historical Memoirs of William Smith, Historian of the Province of New York, Member of the Governor's Council and Last Chief Justice of That Province under the Crown, Chief Justice of Quebec*, ed



- William H. W. Sabine, 2 vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 1: 222; *To the Freeholders and Freemen of the City and County of New York*, April 28, 1775 (New York, 1775), *EAI*, no. 42898.
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  106. Slaughter, “Interpersonal Violence,” 116. Charles Pettit to Joseph Reed, September 21, 1764, Papers of Joseph Reed, 1757–1795, 1824–1842 (microfilm), NYHS.
  107. Jane Scott, *A Gentleman As Well As a Whig: Caesar Rodney and the American Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 36; William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, May 11, 1769, in William A. Whitehead, et al, eds., *Archives of the State of New Jersey*, 48 vols. (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1880–1949), 10: 114.
  108. Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 14.
  109. Hughes to Commissioner of Stamps, November 2, 1765, and Hughes to Swift, Barclay, and Green, November 5, 1765, Treasury 1/441; Hanna, *Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics*, 181.
  110. *Mercury*, January 11, 1762, May 6, August 5, 1765.
  111. *Mercury*, December 30, 1765; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 6, 1766; *WPB*, February 27, 1766.
  112. Marietta and Rowe, *Troubled Experiment*, 107, 265; Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement*, 42, 104, 107, 121, 136, 138, 142; and Carp, *Rebels Rising*, 19. For one view of violence in the South, see Bailyn, *Peopling of British North America*, 118.
  113. Charles Pettit to Joseph Reed, May 2, 1764, Papers of Joseph Reed.
  114. [Isaac Hunt], *A letter from a gentleman in Transilvania to his friend in America giving some account of the late disturbances that have happen'd in that government. . . . Humbly inscribed to Counsellor Quondam by his friend Isaac Bickerstaff, of the Middle Temple* (New-York [i.e., Philadelphia] 1764), *EAI*, no. 9701, 4.
  115. *O! Justitia. A complete trial. God gives, and takes away, well, justice shall take place* (Philadelphia, 1765), *EAI*, no. 10110; the quotes are from pp. 13, 14.
  116. The quote is from Carp, *Rebels Rising*, 191–92.
  117. Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 133.
  118. Hanna, *Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics*, 196. For the religious warfare of the period, also see James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution* (New York: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2008).
  119. “Rusticus” to the Public, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 7, 1765; “A.B.” to Mr. Bradford, *Pennsylvania Journal*, March 7, 1765. *The Christian letter to Presbyterian, Church & Quaker* (Philadelphia, 1765), *EAI*, no. 9928; the quotes are on pp. 7, 4.
  120. “To the Freeholders and Freemen of the City of New-York,” *New York Journal*, February 20, 1768, Supplement, hereafter cited as *NYJ*.
  121. Joan de Lourdes Leonard, “Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *WMQ* 11 (1954): 398–99; Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 245, 360.
  122. *Mercury*, July 21, 1755.
  123. Samuel Purviance to Col. James Burd, September 20, 1765, in Thomas Balch, ed., *Letters and Papers Relating Chiefly to the Provincial History of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1855), 211.
  124. Robert R. Livingston to Monckton, January 26, 1765, in *Aspinwall Papers* (Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, 4th ser., vols. 9–10 [Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871]), 10: 554–55; Thomas M. Truxes, *Letterbook of Greg & Cunningham, 1756–1757: Merchants*



- of *New York City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1, 43–56. For the case's impact in the colony, see John Watts to Monckton, October 12, 1765, in *Aspinwall Papers*, 10: 578–80 and Robert R. Livingston to Robert Livingston, October 19, 1765, in Livingston Family Papers, New York Public Library, New York City. Also see Milton M. Klein, "Prelude to Revolution in New York: Jury Trials and Judicial Tenure," *WMQ* 17 (October 1960): 439–62; and Herbert A. Johnson, "George Harrison's Protest: New Light on Forsey versus Cunningham," *New York History* 50 (January 1969): 61–82.
125. For a recent and valuable study of this issue, see Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: Norton, 2008).
  126. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 15, 1763.
  127. *Mercury*, December 12, 1763.
  128. "Philadelphia, August 6," *Mercury*, August 13, 1764.
  129. "Philadelphia, September 13," *WPB*, September 17, 1764.
  130. For the notorious case of Frederick Stump, see Yeager, "Power of Ethnicity," 209–11.
  131. Capt. William Murray to [Col. Henry Bouquet], February 15, 1765, Gage to Bouquet, Mar 21, 1765, Gage Papers, vol. 32.
  132. Alexander McKee to Johnson, June 18, 1765, in *Johnson Papers*, 11: 796–97.
  133. Thomas Wharton to B. Franklin, August 14, 1765, in *Franklin Papers*, 12: 239.
  134. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 17, 24, 1766.
  135. Gage to Secretary Henry Seymour Conway, May 6, 1766, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931–1933), 1: 91, hereafter cited as *Gage Correspondence*.
  136. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 10, August 7, 1766.
  137. *Votes and proceedings of the House of Representatives of . . . Pennsylvania, met at Philadelphia, on the fourteenth of October, anno Domini 1763, and continued by adjournments* (Philadelphia, [1764]), *EAI*, no. 9787, 14–15.
  138. Sheila L. Skemp, *Benjamin and William Franklin: Father and Son, Patriot and Loyalist* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1994), 45; Melvin H. Buxbaum, *Benjamin Franklin and the Zealous Presbyterians* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1975), 194; Alan Tully, "Ethnicity, Religion, and Politics in Early America," *PMHB* 107 (October 1983): 518–19; James H. Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1746–1770: The Movement for Royal Government and Its Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 94; Griffin *People with No Name*, 169.
  139. David Sloan, "'A Time of Shifting and Winnowing': The Paxton Riots and Quaker Non-Violence in Pennsylvania," *Quaker History* 66 (Spring 1977), 3–22.
  140. Franklin, *A narrative of the late massacres*, 9.
  141. "Lover of truth," *An address to the Rev. Dr. Alison, the Rev. Mr. Ewing, and others, . . . being a vindication of the Quakers from the aspersions of the said trustees in their letter published in the London Chronicle, no. 1223. To which is prefixed, the said letter* ([Philadelphia], 1765), *EAI*, no. 9892; the quotes are from pp. 27, 34, 35.
  142. Franklin, *A narrative of the late massacres*; Buxbaum, *Franklin and Presbyterians*, 192, 199, 252.
  143. Dr. John Ewing to Joseph Reed, 1764, in William B. Reed, ed., *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed: Military Secretary of Washington, at Cambridge; Adjutant-General of the Continental Army; Member*

- of the Congress of the United States; and President of the Executive Council of the State of Pennsylvania, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1847), 1: 335–36.
144. Krista Camenzind, "Violence, Race, and the Paxton Boys," in William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter, *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 204.
  145. For James Smith's account of the event, see his *An account of the remarkable occurrences in the life and travels of Col. James Smith, (now a citizen of Bourbon County, Kentucky) during his captivity with the Indians, in the years 1755, '56, '57, '58, & '59. . . . To which is added, a brief account of some very uncommon occurrences, which transpired after his return from captivity; as well as of the different campaigns carried on against the Indians to the westward of Fort Pitt, since the year 1755, to the present date. Written by himself* (Lexington [Ky.]: John Bradford, 1799), EAI, no. 36317, 60–64. For what historians have said about the matter, see Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 212–19; Eleanor M. Webster, "Insurrection at Fort Loudon in 1765: Rebellion or Preservation of Peace," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 47 (1964): 125–39; John Shy, *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 207–99; Stephen H. Cutcliffe, "Sideling Hill Affair: The Cumberland County Riots of 1765," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 59 (1976), 39–53; and Yeager, "The Power of Ethnicity," 218.
  146. Smith, *An account of the remarkable occurrences in the life and travels of Col. James Smith*, 61.
  147. John Penn to Johnson, March 21, 1765, in *Johnson Papers*, 11: 643–45. Gage to Capt. Thomas Barnsley, March 16, 1765, Gage to Johnson, April 21, 1765, Gage Papers, vol. 32.
  148. Barnsley to Gage, March 11, 1765, Gage Papers, vol. 32.
  149. For Lieutenant Grant's defense of his actions, see Lt. Grant to Gage (Extract), September 16, 1765, in William Egle et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series*, 30 vols. (Harrisburg: Harrisburg Publishing Company, 1894–1899), 14: 240–41. The quote is from Smith, *An account of the remarkable occurrences in the life and travels of Col. James Smith*, 61.
  150. Thomas Wharton to B. Franklin, April 27, 1765, Samuel Wharton to B. Franklin, May 27, 1765 in *Franklin Papers*, 12: 117, 143.
  151. John Penn to Thomas Penn, March 16, 1765, Thomas Penn Papers, reel 9.
  152. Cutcliffe, "Sideling Hill Affair," 51–52.
  153. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, 128.
  154. Ogden, David, *The claim of the inhabitants of the town of Newark, in virtue of the Indian purchase made by the first settlers of Newark, in 1667, stated and considered* (Woodbridge, [1766]), EAI, no. 10435; John E. Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey: A History* (New York: Scribner, 1973), 153–63; Nicholas Murray, *Notes Historical and Biographical concerning Elizabeth-town, Its Eminent Men, Churches, and Ministers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 1–12; McConville, *These Disturbers of the Peace*; and Joseph R. Kleet, *Using the Records of the East and West Jersey Proprietors* (n.p.: New Jersey State Archives, 2006), 10–11; located at <http://www.nj.gov/state/darm/links/pdf/proprietors.pdf>.
  155. Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey*, 163; McConville, *These Disturbers of the Peace*, 2.

156. William J. Eisenring, "Monmouth and Essex Counties' 1769–70 Riots against Lawyers: Predecessors of Revolutionary Social Conflict," *New Jersey History* 112 (Spring/Summer 1994), 15.
157. Michael A. Bellesiles, *Revolutionary Outlaws: Ethan Allen and the Struggle for Independence on the Early American Frontier* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993); Paul R. Huey, "Charlotte County," in Tiedemann and Fingerhut, eds., *Other New York*, 199–222.
158. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *The Documentary History of the State of New-York*, 4 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parson, 1849–1851), 4: 531–35, 538–41, 544, 547, 549; Mary Greene Nye, ed., *New York Land Patents, 1688–1786, Covering Land Now Included in the State of Vermont* (Montpelier: Secretary of State of Vermont, 1947), 3–4; and Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 524.
159. For a defense of New Hampshire's point of view, see *Some reflections on the disputes between New-York, New-Hampshire, and Col. John Henry Lydius of Albany. To these reflections are added, some rules of law, fit to be observed in purchasing land, &c.* (New Haven, 1764), *EAI*, no. 9892; New York's case can be found in Colden to Board of Trade, January 20, 1764, in O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to Colonial History of New York*, 7: 595–98.
160. Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 524.
161. *The Journals of Captain John Montresor*, ed. G. D. Scull (New-York Historical Society [NYHS], *Collections*, 14 [New York, 1882]), 367.
162. Huey, "Charlotte County," in Tiedemann and Fingerhut, eds., *Other New York*, 202.
163. Lorett Treese, *The Storm Gathering: The Penn Family and the American Revolution* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), chap. 9; and Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 78–79, 529–34.
164. For the way Pennsylvanians viewed the dispute, see "G.H.," *I saw, the other day, in the Pennsylvania chronicle, a short state of the Connecticut people's claim to the lands at Wioming, on the Susquehanna, and as there are many very material facts and circumstances, relating to the title of those lands, which are not inserted therein . . .* (Philadelphia, 1769), *EAI*, no. 11281; William Smith, *An examination of the Connecticut claim to lands in Pennsylvania. With an appendix, containing extracts and copies taken from original papers* (Philadelphia, 1774), *EAI*, no. 13629.
165. Willim Henry Egle et al, eds., *Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series*, 19 vols. (Harrisburg: E. K. Meyers, State Printer, 1879–1891), 18: 3; Albert Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (New York: Random House, 1961), 124; Treese, *Storm Gathering*, chap. 9; and Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 78–79, 529–34.
166. T. Penn to Lord Halifax, December 10, 1760, Thomas Penn Papers, reel 8.
167. "Daniel Broadhead's Report of his Journey to, and Transactions at Wyoming," September 27, 1762, in *Johnson Papers*, 10: 530.
168. Shy, *Toward Lexington*, 202.
169. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 27, 1763; George W. Franz, *Paxton: A Study of Community Structure and Mobility in the Colonial Pennsylvania Backcountry* (New York: Garland Press, 1989), 67; Treese, *Storm Gathering*, 105; and Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 534.
170. Treese, *Storm Gathering*, 165–66; Yeager, "Power of Ethnicity," 152.
171. Sung Bok Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1664–1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), chap. 7; the quote is on p. 282. Michael Kammen,

- Colonial New York: A History* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 298; Thomas J. Humphrey, *Land and Liberty: Hudson Valley Riots in the Age of the Revolution* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004).
172. Developments can be followed in Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 217–23; Patricia U. Bonomi, *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 218–24; Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 302–4; Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, chap. 8. For an alternate interpretation, see Irving Mark, *Agrarian Conflicts in Colonial New York, 1711–1775* (Port Washington: I. J. Friedman, 1965) and Staughton Lynd, *Anti-Federalism in Dutchess County: A Study of Democracy and Class Conflict in the Revolutionary Era* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962).
  173. *Montresor Journal*, 360–61.
  174. *Montresor Journal*, 363.
  175. Son of Liberty. *I congratulate my countrymen on the near and certain prospect of the repeal of the Stamp-Act.*
  176. WPB, November 28, 1765; Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 39–41.
  177. By His Excellency Sir Henry Moore, Baronet, captain general and governor in chief in and over the province of New-York. . . . A proclamation. Whereas it appears by proof on oath, that William Pendergast {and seven others} . . . have committed high treason . . . I have thought fit . . . to apprehend, or cause to be apprehended, all and every the persons above-named, and charged with having committed high treason . . . Given under my hand, and seal at arms at Fort-George, in the city of New-York, the twentieth day of June, 1766 [New York, 1766], EAI, no. 10416. The quote is from Gage to Conway, June 24, 1766, in *Gage Correspondence* 1: 95.
  178. *New York Gazette* (Weyman's), September 29, 1766, hereafter cited as *Weyman's*.
  179. Lord Shelburne to Moore, December 11, 1766, in O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to Colonial History of New York* 7: 879.
  180. Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 192.
  181. WPB, January 16, 23, 1764.
  182. Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 389; I. N. Phelps Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498–1909: Compiled from Original Sources and Illustrated*, 6 vols. (New York: Arno, 1967), 4:767; Moore to Richmond, August 23, 1766, in O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to Colonial History of New York*, 7: 867; *Montresor Journals*, 378; and WPB, July 17, 1766.
  183. NYJ, November 6, 13, 1766. For examples, see *Mercury*, October 27, 1766; *Weyman's*, November 17, 1766; NYJ, November 13, 1766, April 9, September 3, 1767, February 4, 1768, August 31, 1769; and WPB, June 25, 1767.
  184. "Philadelphia, February 19" and "A Message from the Governor to the Assembly," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 19, 1756; "Annapolis, February 5," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 26, 1756. Charles Brodine, "Civil-Military Relations in Pennsylvania, 1758–1760: An Examination of John Shy's Thesis," *PH* 62 (April 1995): 225.
  185. Shy, *Toward Lexington*, 168–69.
  186. Lt. Col. R. Elliot to Gage, July 9, 1764, Gage Papers, vol. 21. The quote is from Philip Schuyler to Gage, July 7, 1764, Gage Papers, vol. 21.

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- 187. Thomas Bell to Gage, October 8, 1764, and Gage to Ensn. [Thomas] Bell, October 14, 1764, Gage Papers, vol. 25. Shy, *Toward Lexington*, 168–69.
- 188. *WPB*, July 12, 1764; Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 46.
- 189. Colden to Gage, December 29, 1764, Gage to Colden, December 30, 1764, Gage Papers, vol. 29. Tiedemann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, chap. 2.
- 190. Bodle, “‘Myth of the Middle Colonies’ Reconsidered,” 548.
- 191. To the Printer, *WPB*, November 14, 1765.