

HOMELAND SECURITY IN THE  
PENNSYLVANIA BACKCOUNTRY,  
1777-1778: THE EXAMPLE OF  
THE REVEREND MR. DANIEL  
BATWELLE, SPG

*James P. Myers Jr.*  
*Gettysburg College*

Throughout the Revolutionary War, the Associated Loyalists of southcentral Pennsylvania conspired either to destroy or to seize weapons from the US arsenals in Carlisle, York, and Lancaster.<sup>1</sup> The names of several residents of Cumberland, York, and Lancaster Counties, some openly known to be Loyalists, others clandestinely working for the British, recur in correspondence, depositions, and other documents of the period.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this essay, however, is not to rehearse the history of those known to be working against the patriot cause. Rather, it will focus on the Reverend Mr. Daniel Batwelle, Anglican missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), who was accused and imprisoned, but never tried, for allegedly participating in one such plot. Batwelle's case reveals the strenuous efforts by radical patriots in Cumberland and York Counties to enforce ideological conformity on American citizens dwelling

“over Susquehanna.” As spiritual leader of a religious group whose members generally advocated either reconciliation with Great Britain or resistance to the new nation born of revolution, and as one who knew several Associated Loyalists, Batwelle was identified early on as a potential enemy of the United States precisely because of his importance to the Anglican community in these two counties.

Batwelle’s ordeal began in September 1777, at the glebe house of Christ Church, Huntington Township, then York (now Adams) County, where he was serving as minister. His seizure by patriot forces marks an episode in Loyalist history extraordinary even for those times. In part, the convergence of two other occurrences in 1777 helps us appreciate the forces that produced so remarkable an event—first, the precipitous rise to power of Pennsylvania’s radical Constitutional Party and, second, General Sir William Howe’s invasion of the state, followed by his decisive defeat of Continental forces in two battles, which opened the way for his occupying Philadelphia. In short, September 1777 released upon Pennsylvania’s new regime a threat which the zealous patriots—at least those firmly rooted in Cumberland and York Counties—endeavored to meet with extreme extralegal and antilibertarian countermeasures.

Here is Batwelle’s terse but poignant account of the episode, taken from a letter he wrote on October 1, 1777, to John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, then meeting in York-town, Pa.: “In the Night between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September I was seized in my Bed in a dangerous sickness, and being unable to stand, or help myself, was put with my Bed into a waggon, and conveyed to York Prison, where I have since lain in a most languishing Condition.”<sup>3</sup> He concludes by

protesting (as I do in the most solemn manner) my absolute Innocence of the Crimes laid to my Charge [i.e., principally, that he had conspired to destroy the U. S. arsenals in Carlisle, York, and Lancaster, and had communicated with the enemy], I petition that the Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Congress would be pleased to enquire into the matter, and either discharge me out of Prison, or admit me to Bail, as my Situation is such that if confined longer, I must be lost for want of proper Assistance.

Batwelle reinforced his appeal with an affidavit from Dr. David Jameson “that he must sink under [his fever] unless he is allowed a better air than what the Goal [*sic*] of York County affords.”<sup>4</sup>

Congress immediately referred Batwelle’s appeal to Pennsylvania’s Supreme Executive Council for action, recommending that he be granted “every indulgence necessary for the preservation of his health and the safe keeping of his person.”<sup>5</sup> Subsequent petitions from Batwelle, resolutions from Congress, interpretations by General Daniel Roberdeau (a radical patriot and one of Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegates), and lack of documentation (whether destroyed or lost) recording Pennsylvania’s feelings and actions make it very difficult to appreciate exactly what happened to Batwelle during the five months leading to his being allowed to leave Pennsylvania at the end of February 1778. The following summarizes the somewhat confusing events that unfolded.

Although his October 1 petition secured some improvement to his situation, Batwelle’s failing health prompted him to send a second appeal to Congress on November 7, thanking it for saving him “from speedy and certain Death” but also reminding members of Dr. Jameson’s opinion “that fresh air and Exercise are absolutely requisite for [my] recovery.”<sup>6</sup> This appears once again to have moved Congress, for a week later Roberdeau and William Clingan apprised Pennsylvania President Thomas Wharton of Batwelle’s confinement in “a private house” and, although Batwelle was “much emaciated, and [still] afflicted with [crippling] Rh[e]umatic pains in his Knees,” he confessed that “he was much better than while he was in prison.” The two Pennsylvania congressmen reported further that “he offers his parole as well as Bail if he is allowed to go to his former place of abode in this County [York], . . . or [be] permitted to take the fresh air, and exercise here [in York-town], for the recovery of his health, w<sup>ch</sup> we are of opinion may effect it.” Finally, they forwarded Batwelle’s appeal to the Pennsylvania council for a “speedy” decision on his case “that he may sell or remove his effects and three children now at the . . . glebe belonging to the Church, as he cannot afford to keep two families.”<sup>7</sup>

The council evidently failed to act favorably because a month and a half later, on December 26, 1777, Batwelle penned yet another petition to Congress. Like his appeal of October 1, this address emphatically insisted that he was “perfectly innocent of the traitorous facts and designs said to be alleged against him.”<sup>8</sup> Supporting his petition for “enlargement either on parole or his giving security or both,” he enclosed a second medical “certification” of his

dangerously poor condition, this from Dr. Robert Henry, who found Batwelle “labouring under a Complication of Disorders, which may be Productive of more Alarming ones (if not Speedily Remedied), Particularly a Hectic Fever.”<sup>9</sup> The following day, in a motion that “passed in the negative” because the vote was tied, Congress urged the Pennsylvania Council “that he be allowed to go to his farm, giving his parole to hold no correspondence with the enemies of the United States, nor to do anything whatever to the prejudice of the American cause, there to remain till further orders.”<sup>10</sup>

In his letter to Pennsylvania Vice President George Bryan two days after this vote, Roberdeau explained Congress’s dilemma in endeavoring to persuade Pennsylvania to adopt a more humane attitude toward its prisoner, “whose life was reported to be in imminent danger, & might add to the number of marters in the esteem of the disaffected,” for it recognized “the delicacy of interfering with” its host state, which, once leading the vanguard of libertarian thought in the former colonies, was now becoming one of the new nation’s most repressive states.<sup>11</sup> In cautioning Pennsylvania against adding “to the number of marters,” Congress tacitly reminded the state of its role in the needless, recent death of Dr. John Kearsley, famed Philadelphia Loyalist who, despite extremely poor health, had been incarcerated in the Carlisle jail, widely known for its deplorable condition.<sup>12</sup> To avoid accusations of interfering “with the police of the State,” Congress resolved a second, milder, substitute recommendation to Pennsylvania that “in the Opinion of Congress, the Rev. Mr. Batwelle should be discharged out of confinement, on his taking an oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania; or, on his refusal, that he should be allowed to go with his family into the city of Philadelphia.”<sup>13</sup> His own situation as go-between “extremely delicate,” Roberdeau diplomatically cautioned the council on the danger it courted were it to continue ignoring or defying Congress’s thrice-iterated pleasure in the Batwelle matter.<sup>14</sup>

The Pennsylvania Council must have heeded Roberdeau’s warning, for on January 5, 1778, Batwelle thanked Congress for his release and asked for a safe-conduct or passport authorizing his passing into the British lines.<sup>15</sup> If, pressured by Congress, the Pennsylvania council backed off from its draconian stance in early January, it nevertheless evidently continued to delay Batwelle’s actual release and departure until the end of February. As recorded in the SPG summary of Batwelle’s trials, “on 21st Feb . . . he was permitted to come out of his confinement at York, & to get into a Waggon with his family, in which he passed the Co[unty] Covered with snow, & crossed the Susquehannah on the ice being 7 days in performing a journey of 89 miles—a

dreadful journey to him, who had be[en] 7 mos. sick, & imprisoned during the 5 last.”<sup>16</sup> On Sir Henry Clinton’s evacuation of Philadelphia in June 1778, Batwelle removed to New York City, where the Reverend Dr. Charles Inglis insured that Batwelle, now blind in one eye and still unable to walk without crutches, had decent lodgings in that overcrowded city.<sup>17</sup>

In February 1780 Batwelle and his family sailed back to England, where he sought an appointment to a church and continued writing to such American friends as Major John André, Christopher Sauer, and the Reverend George Panton.<sup>18</sup> He also set about the chore of obtaining compensation from the crown for real estate seized by Pennsylvania for his Loyalism. We must note that in his memorial to the Loyalist claims commission Batwelle does not cite as proof of his loyalty to Great Britain any evidence of his leadership or even low-level involvement in the Loyalist plot to destroy US arsenals in 1777. Had he been eager to establish his good record, he would certainly have rehearsed his participation—as did, say, his acquaintance Dr. Henry Norris, who expended some five pages narrating his many roles as an active leader in the Associated Loyalists.<sup>19</sup> Rather, to prove his fidelity to Great Britain, Batwelle simply affirmed that he “continued to discharge his Duties and inculcate a Spirit of Loyalty throughout his extensive Mission from the Commencement of the Troubles in America till 23<sup>d</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 1777, when he was seized and imprisoned by Order of the Rebel Gov<sup>t</sup>.”<sup>20</sup> Batwelle’s silence on the militant Loyalist activity he had been accused of in 1777—silence he had every reason now to ignore in his memorial to the claims commission—gives credibility to his earlier denials of guilt to Congress. But because he still received an allowance from the SPG and a half-pay pension from his time as chaplain to the Fourth New Jersey Volunteers, and because of some irregularities in his claim to over 200 acres of land given him by the Penn proprietary, his appeal was denied.<sup>21</sup>

Pennsylvania’s stubborn, protracted refusal to allow Batwelle to swear the oath of allegiance or leave the state—the choice recommended several times by Congress and the solution the Pennsylvania council generally resorted to in dealing with most of its other British Loyalists—Congress perceived as embarrassing and potentially dangerous should Batwelle die while in custody. One wonders, therefore, why the council waited several more months after Congress’s third recommendation before freeing the dangerously ill Batwelle. In fact, one also wonders why, if the authorities in Cumberland County had sufficient cause to cross into York County and arrest the sick clergyman in the early hours of the morning of September 24 on charges of treason, they

or their opposite numbers in York did not try him.<sup>22</sup> We will never know with certainty why, but examining Batwelle's unique case and circumstances produces several insights into how Pennsylvania responded to a perceived threat to its authority in the back counties "over Susquehanna" during the dark month when British forces invaded Pennsylvania, defeated Washington at Brandywine on September 11, massacred Continental troops (mostly Pennsylvanians) at Paoli on the twentieth, and occupied Philadelphia on the twenty-sixth. After Howe checked Washington's attempt at Germantown to challenge his hold on Philadelphia (October 4), moreover, the British continued to menace and threaten to invade the remainder of the state at will. The year 1777 and early 1778 was a time of great anxiety to Pennsylvania, a period of near anarchy.

Batwelle's arrest and imprisonment are the more surprising because his American mission began auspiciously. After he first arrived in York County on April 5, 1774, his new parishioners received him enthusiastically. One of his vestrymen and a member of the SPG, York lawyer Samuel Johnston recorded for the society a vivid picture of Batwelle's initial successes among "Protestants of all Denominations."<sup>23</sup> Even as the energies contributing to the Revolution mounted, Batwelle delivered a sermon on July 20, 1775, the solemn national day of fasting and prayer decreed by Congress. Exhorting his listeners—colonial rifle companies commanded by Captains Morgan and Price—to seek legal redress for the wrongs enacted by Britain and thereby obtain reconciliation with the mother country, he concluded with a long prayer unequivocally declaring his sympathy for the colonial cause, hoping especially "that [America's] civil and religious Liberties may be secured to the latest posterity."<sup>24</sup>

Batwelle's fasting-day sermon expresses both his appreciation of the colonies' just grievances and his advocacy of reconciliation with Great Britain. In this, he represented the feelings generally expressed by his Anglican colleagues in Pennsylvania and even by a great number of Pennsylvania's Republican patriots.<sup>25</sup> After Pennsylvania banned the prayers for the royal family prescribed by the Church of England liturgy, making it impossible for Batwelle to perform divine service, however, he boarded up his three churches. Defiantly refusing to mutilate the liturgy in the interests of political expediency (initially, most of his colleagues in Philadelphia did omit the prayers), Batwelle invited official and social censure.<sup>26</sup> Three of his Christ Church parishioners, moreover, openly embraced the Loyalist cause.<sup>27</sup> Centered on the

Huntington Township church, this defiance, although mostly passive at this point, opened Batwelle and his parishioners to harassment and intimidation. Batwelle reported "that in March & Harvest 1776 large bodies of armed Militia treated [his largely Loyalist parishioners in Huntington] with great barbarity," denouncing them as "the Bermudian Creek Tories."<sup>28</sup>

The year 1776 marked a turning point for Batwelle, for apart from the July 4 proclamation of independence, patriotic fervor began concentrating itself against those who refused to demonstrate their support for the new government, who were lukewarm in doing so, or who naively struggled to remain neutral. Not only did Batwelle's Christ Church parishioner John Wilson refuse at this time to swear the mandated oath of allegiance to Pennsylvania, but he "also took an active part in endeavouring to promote a spirit of Loyalty in that part of the Country where he had any influence." For these actions, "he was seized in Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1776[,] imprisoned in the Common Gaol of Carlisle and sentenced to be published in the News Papers as an Enemy to the Liberties of America and being thus held up he soon found himself rendered so obnoxious that he could no longer remain with safety in the Country." Fleeing York County, Wilson made his way to New York City, where he joined the Queen's Rangers, in which regiment he served with distinction throughout the war.<sup>29</sup> Although documentation is lacking, another member of the Christ Church congregation, James Bracken, also fled the county to enlist in the British army.<sup>30</sup>

The event that probably moved Batwelle from the passive Loyalist stance he shared with most of his rural Anglican colleagues into more active opposition occurred in September 1776 when, "advised not to come to [York-town] for fear of being ill Treated," he nonetheless journeyed into that town to obtain provisions. As narrated by Samuel Johnston, diehard patriotic Pennsylvania Germans seized Batwelle's

Horse by the Bridle and insisted it was stole. . . . They then pretended, they would shew him the right owner; and lead him to the Water, which runs through this Town [Cordorus Creek], where with more than Savage Cruelty, they soused him in the Water several times; they then made him ride out of Town in that Condition above twelve Miles before he got dry Cloths. . . . What M<sup>r</sup> Batwell had done, those wicked People could not say themselves, but it was because he was a Tory, as they thought proper to call him, as almost all the Church People in this County are, and every other Person who is against the most violent Measures is sure of the same Epithet. <sup>31</sup>

This abuse evidently pushed Batwelle into more active resistance, but just how active remains unclear. Initially, he must have exhorted his congregation to resist the increasingly oppressive measures the patriots implemented. He may even have enthusiastically supported John Wilson's and James Bracken's determination to join the British army. In our own time commentators generally accept that Batwelle indeed conspired to destroy the arsenals in Carlisle, York, and Lancaster.<sup>32</sup> Extant records, however, fail to show his active involvement in the scheme. Rather, surviving documentation intimates that Batwelle was the victim of policies devised by radical patriots to guarantee uniform support for the revolutionary government. Following immediately upon Washington's defeat and Howe's occupation of Philadelphia, the radicals, and especially the Presbyterian Constitutionalists centered in Carlisle, acted swiftly to extirpate by all possible means what they perceived to represent an intolerable challenge to their authority.<sup>33</sup>

As Anglican missionary for three churches encompassing a geographic area reaching from Carlisle to York, Batwelle in effect had responsibility for a territory which the radicals must have perceived as a threatening Loyalist island within their inland sea of fervent patriotic sentiment, for not only was the Bermudian/Conewago Creek area home to a relatively substantial number of Loyalist Anglicans, but it also supported the Menallen, Warrington, Newberry, and York Quaker meetings, as well as a number of Germans pietists. These pietists, if, like the Quakers, were most probably not dedicated Loyalists, nonetheless remained faithful to their pacifist principles and indifferent to and suspicious of the patriots' cause and coercive tactics, an uncompromising commitment which brought down upon them denunciations of being enemies to the United States. Viewed by the radicals as a rallying figure for various disaffected residents in the Loyalist enclave, Batwelle was a conspicuous target for those determined to silence all opposition and to coerce from everyone unambiguous and uncritical allegiance to the new government. Additionally, the largely Presbyterian patriots—the Constitutional Party was, in fact, sometimes identified as the *Presbyterian* Party—who were especially strong in Cumberland County, exploited new opportunities to avenge themselves on their old “enemies,” the Quakers, who had earlier dominated the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and the Anglicans, who had formerly allied themselves with the Penn proprietary.<sup>34</sup> This gives the oppression of the Bermudian/Conewago settlement the character of a local feud with roots antedating the Revolution. In his discussion of the great diversity of the group we now term “Loyalists,” Henry Young



precisely identifies the unique cultural character of what occurred in York and Cumberland Counties. Loyalists, Young writes, were often “the more devoted Anglicans. . . . In every feud-ridden neighborhood they were one of the two local parties; for irrelevant disputes were generally not abandoned at the outset of the war: instead they quickly took on, almost at random, the larger enmities of Whig and Tory.”<sup>35</sup>

Judith Ridner has recognized the pivotal role in the American Revolution played by Carlisle’s Scots-Irish, largely Presbyterian, radical politicians.<sup>36</sup> Centered in what may be appreciated as the Presbyterian “capital” of Pennsylvania, the patriots promoted a vision in which they championed freedom, virtue, and righteousness against the tyranny, degeneracy, and elitism they associated with other denominations, such as the Quakers and especially the Anglicans. Heirs to ethnic and religious contention reaching back to their time in the north of Ireland, with its established Church of Ireland, the radical Scots-Irish patriots had already excavated their battle lines during the French and Indian War, when they checked the growing authority of Thomas Barton, the first Anglican missionary to reside over Susquehanna.<sup>37</sup> The apparent popularity and energy of the Church of England’s most recent incumbent now invited them to renew the old battle.

Two depositions set forth the case for Batwelle’s presumed treason. Scrutinized closely, they consist of innuendo, hearsay, and references to missing documents which might or might not have been forgeries. The narrative they create is confusing and at times even farcical. We can identify three figures central to this narrative: (1) the principal witness deposed, Daniel Shelly; (2) the principal target of the accusations, Daniel Batwelle; and (3) a shadowy, elusive informant and mover of the action, David Copeland, who at times recalls the Machiavellian manipulator in some Jacobean melodrama.

Sometime-Quaker David Copeland (of Newberry Township, York County) may have been acting out some personal grudge against Batwelle.<sup>38</sup> It is more likely, however, that he was being guided by officials in Carlisle in order eventually not only to eliminate Batwelle’s leadership in the Bermudian/Conewago settlement but also to punish him for his Anglican intransigence. In his deposition of September 22, taken at Carlisle, not York or Lancaster, Shelly organized his narrative about the figure of Batwelle.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, he had been primed to do so by his interrogators because the first and much earlier September 6 joint deposition of William Beckworth and Adam Laughlin paints a far broader picture of the Loyalist conspiracy in

which several other notable persons figure in prominent roles. In Shelly's tale, however, Batwelle is the principal villain. He deposes that Copeland initially approached him sometime in April with intelligence that "the Revd. Mr. Batwelle . . . & others, could destroy all the Magazines at Lancaster, York & Carlisle." At the end of April or beginning of May, Copeland sought Shelly out once more, pointedly asking if Batwelle had visited him (Shelly lived on Shelly Island in the Susquehanna, on the western boundary of Lancaster County): "this Affirmant answered He had not." Copeland then disclosed that he had learned that "Mr. Batwell was very desirous to see this Affirmant to have a Commission" from General Howe to command any men he could raise in York County. Thus baited, Shelly rode about thirty miles to Batwelle's house, but did not find him in. Tightening his trap, Copeland next

sent a Piece of writing to this, signed by Mr. Batwell, *as far as this Affirmant knows and believes, (for this Affirmant cannot write—neither read Dutch or English writing,)* which writing was read . . . by a certain Thomas Bennet, the purport of which writing was to desire this Affirmant to keep quiet, for that they would be relieved in about a Month [emphasis added].

Some ten days after this, Copeland, Shelly *believes*, "brought another written Paper . . . to this Affirmant . . . & *believes* it was also signed by Mr. Batwell. He *understood* it was a Copy of a Letter written at New York, gave an acc't that Ticonderoga was taken" (emphasis added).<sup>40</sup> This improbable scenario would have Batwelle copy a treasonous letter he had received, sign it, then risk its being sent thirty miles through "hostile" country to an illiterate, blustering, somewhat unstable Mennonite he had never met.<sup>41</sup> Even though the same intelligence openly appeared ten days later in the Philadelphia newspapers, this hearsay letter (reporting the capture of Ticonderoga by the patriots) was to be used as proof that Batwelle was in treasonous communication with the enemy (a second charge in his arrest warrant), which "enemy" in this case was simply his Anglican colleague Thomas Barton, who had first sent him the news.

The long tentacles of the Carlisle patriots also reached out to embrace the Reverend Thomas Barton, SPG incumbent missionary of St. James's Church in Lancaster. On September 25, 1777, the lieutenant of Cumberland County, John Carothers, wrote to Lancaster justice of the peace and member

of that county's Committee of Safety William Henry that "the Rev<sup>d</sup> Thomas Barton . . . is named as one at least privy to that conspiracy [against the government magazines]. He is also charged with carrying on Correspondence with the Enemies of this State, and of the United States of America. . . . I make no Doubt but that you will cause Mr Barton to be secured in such manner as your prudence shall direct."<sup>42</sup> As nearly as can be determined, Henry, former parishioner of St. James's, prudently failed "to . . . secure" the Reverend Mr. Barton. In the far less fanatical political climate of Lancaster, Barton, even though recognized as a Loyalist, was generally esteemed and appreciated as posing no active threat to the American cause.<sup>43</sup>

Shelly testified that near the end of July or first of August Batwelle, accompanied by "a certain Dr. Norris . . . and a certain Mr. McDonald" and some other conspirators, came to his house.<sup>44</sup> The English near Philadelphia, they said, "allowed a Colonel's Commission to this Affirmant, which he refused to accept." Notwithstanding this wildly improbable offer, the clearly gullible Shelly indicated that he would nevertheless like to lead some men against the town of York. Shelly concluded by remembering that "Mr. Batwell told him that they had Friends in Marsh Creek and in [adjacent] Maryland," an area settled predominantly by Presbyterian patriots.<sup>45</sup>

William Beckworth and Adam Laughlin's earlier and more broadly focused September 6 deposition (like Shelly's, this was also taken in Carlisle) fills in events that occurred before Copeland approached Shelly. The two deponents declare that on September 5 the ever-busy Copeland, taking "refreshment" with the two men at John Rankin's tavern on the west shore of the Susquehanna, spoke only in general terms about the Loyalists (including Batwelle) who were plotting to raise a rebellion against the new government.<sup>46</sup> The three men then rowed over to Shelly's house on Shelly Island. There, the men certainly continued to "refresh" themselves, because Shelly was soon wildly fantasizing about raising, with British assistance, no less than 10,000 men in order to "carry all York county." After laying plans for future meetings, Shelly then "took a canoe and carried them to Lancaster shore" to meet with another disaffected farmer, George Fry (or Frys/Fryes), where, opportunely, "Col. Buckannan and his party were and took Daniel Schelley [*sic*] prisoner."<sup>47</sup> The last we hear of Copeland is his concluding interpretation appended to Shelly's deposition that Shelly "was rather cool of late in the affair, but he bel[i]ved he might be trusted, and father saith not."<sup>48</sup> "Might [still] be trusted" for what?—implicating Batwelle in the treasonous plot?

Copeland's observation on Shelly, gratuitously tacked onto the latter's deposition, reads like an aside in an earlier melodrama and illuminates the probable strategy at work throughout the episodes involving the two. From their first meeting on, Copeland was setting Shelly up to entrap Batwelle. The scheme appears designed to have Copeland lure the simple-minded Shelly (who was intended to believe that General Howe himself had promised him a colonel's commission) into committing himself to lead an armed rebellion against the newly constituted government. The authorities then could use that evidence of conspiracy to pressure Shelly into becoming a state's witness against Batwelle, promising him, instead of a death sentence, a pardon for his cooperation. Notice, for example, that Beckworth and Laughlin state that "Col. Buckannan . . . took Daniel Schelley prisoner" but fail to include themselves or Copeland as prisoners. The first two, of course, were probably freed once they made their deposition. We never hear of them again; nor do we learn what happened to Copeland once the authorities had arrested Shelly. In fact, one Cumberland County commissioner evidently concerned with legalities, George Stevenson, who was probably not fully in on the plot, wrote a puzzled note to Lancaster Justice of the Peace William Henry (the conspirators were arrested in Lancaster County), querying him on the whereabouts of Copeland: "Have you done any Thing towards securing David Copeland . . . ? I wish he were secured; he is a material Witness—having been much employed carrying letters & Messages among the Conspirators."<sup>49</sup> But, in fact, Copeland conveniently disappeared once his role of provocateur had been fulfilled.

That Stevenson may not have been fully apprised of the scheme is further suggested by a later note he wrote expressing dismay that the state's other material witness, Daniel Shelly, was still in the Carlisle prison over three months after his arrest, after having given state's evidence, and after having petitioned several times to request the release his captors had promised once he testified against Batwelle.<sup>50</sup> Evidently sincerely concerned with "the unfortunate Daniel Shelly," Stevenson observed that his being incarcerated "in the same Place with, and treated in the same Manner as the obstinate Jersey Tories [who are] . . . bad company for a State Witness," was unjust and that Shelly should therefore be released, as agreed earlier. Stevenson apparently did not know that the Supreme Executive Council early on had decided that Shelly was to be kept locked up and denied bail until after Batwelle's trial. On September 16, 1777, between the dates of Beckworth/Laughlin's deposition and Shelly's—the same day, moreover, the council voted to

prohibit the use of writs of habeas corpus<sup>51</sup>—it wrote Justice of the Peace John Creigh in Carlisle that

it is agreed that if Daniel Shelly, who is in custody, will really & candidly become a publick witness, & give evidence for the State, so as his accomplices be convicted, he will be considered as meriting his pardon, & that he shall have it from Council. But *he must not be bailed or enlarged before tryal*. Besides, he must immediately enable you to arrest the rest [emphasis added].<sup>52</sup>

“He must not be bailed or enlarged before tryal”—clearly, the Supreme Executive Council feared that the malleable Shelly, once beyond their control, might change his story and fall prey to other voices not serving their interests. If so, their anxiety would have been well-taken, for Daniel Shelly enjoyed something of a “reputation.” Edward Burd, son of Colonel James Burd of French and Indian War fame and one of the most influential landowners in that section of Lancaster County (near today’s Middletown), wrote to noted Lancaster lawyer Jasper Yeates that Shelly had been “carried to Carlisle Gaol by some People from Juniata. The Charge against him was an Intention to burn Lancaster & York. . . . He was a great Tory, & was I believe very impudent in his Confidence & Expressions but I can hardly believe he would be guilty of so villainous a Design.”<sup>53</sup>

If Edward Burd doubted the depth of Shelly’s treachery, he had good reason. A year earlier, James Burd himself had been victim of Shelly’s wild accusations. On July 4, 1776, Burd wrote Captain James Couch that Shelly had been mustering troops without authorization. Arrested and examined by the Lancaster Committee of Safety, Shelly “had said that the English could easily take the country in six weeks’ time, [but] that he knew where there was plenty of ammunition, and that ‘Col. James Burd Will Not Sware to Be true to the Country.’”<sup>54</sup> A few days after America had declared her independence, Shelly was already fantasizing about seizing arms *from* the British arsenals, although at this time presumably *to aid* the American cause. Biographer Lily Nixon closes her account of the episode by noting: “Thus did an ignorant and over zealous frontiersman sow the seeds of calumny. So far as the Lancaster Committee was concerned, Shelby’s words had little effect.”<sup>55</sup>

In 1776 Shelly was an overenthusiastic patriot denouncing as a Loyalist the much respected Colonel James Burd, a moderate patriot who was to serve in the Revolutionary army. One year later, Edward Burd wrote that Shelly “was

a great Loyalist." Both the Lancaster committee and Edward Burd agreed that Shelly was "impudent in his Confidence & Expressions." The radical patriots of Carlisle, however, must have recognized in Shelly a wild instability and "impudence" they could exploit to their advantage.

Although the Cumberland County justices of the peace might have felt assured that they could use the testimony of the easily manipulated Shelly to arrest Batwelle, they evidently believed—or hoped—that conclusive proof of Batwelle's complicity in the plot would be found among his papers. A post-script to the September 23 mittimus pointedly provides, not only for seizing Batwelle's personal papers, but also for forwarding those papers to Carlisle rather than retaining them in York-town, where Batwelle, a York County resident arrested in York County, would logically be tried: "If any Political Papers shall be found they are to be delivered to A. McClean or Wm. Scott, Esqr., by them to be transmitted by the first safe Hand to Carlisle."<sup>56</sup>

Notwithstanding this detailed provision, however, nearly two months later Archibald McClean (or McClane) was unsure what he should do with Batwelle's papers: Daniel Roberdeau and William Clingan wrote that "the papers belonging to M<sup>r</sup>. Batwell taken with his person were deposited in the hands of Mr. McClane in this Town [York], who applied to one of us to know how they should be disposed of, which was moved to Congress, but they [Congress] would give no orders concerning them, therefore they wait your commands, and are as yet undisclosed, except two letters of no great importance communicated to one of us."<sup>57</sup> McClean's indecision might be taken as the measure of his puzzlement over what struck him as a jurisdictional irregularity (that is, removing evidence properly secured in York to the seat of Cumberland County).

Equally noteworthy, moreover, almost two months after Batwelle's arrest, executed with speedy urgency on the cleric in his sickbed in the wee hours of the very morning after his warrant was issued, only "two letters of no great importance" had been read, the bulk of his papers "as yet undisclosed."<sup>58</sup> Had Batwelle's papers contained conclusive proof of his guilt, it is highly probable he would have been tried and convicted. Six days after his first appeal to Congress (October 1), for example, Congress resolved "that it be recommended to the legislatures of the several states to pass laws, declaring that any person, his aider or abettor, who shall wilfully & maliciously burn or destroy, or attempt or conspire to burn or destroy any magazine of provisions, or of military or naval stores belonging to the United States . . . shall suffer death without benefit of clergy."<sup>59</sup> The legal procedures and punishment for

dealing with militant Loyalists had already been clearly set forth by Congress itself.

During this same period, when near-hysteria held Pennsylvania in its grip, perpetrators of far less heinous crimes against the state were arrested, tried, and executed with little delay. At the same time that Batwelle was perhaps wondering why the county authorities of Cumberland and York were still refusing to allow him the opportunity to leave Pennsylvania, as thrice recommended by Congress, a very different scenario was playing out on the other side of the Susquehanna.

On February 2 and 3, 1778, Lancaster's William Henry took depositions from the recently apprehended Lieutenant Henry Mansin (of the Queen's Rangers), Wendel Meyer, and Joseph Rode, all of whom provided details of a Loyalist smuggling ring that used the mill of George Rein (or Rhine, Rinne) near today's New Holland, Lancaster County, as base of operations. The depositions detailed a motley group of farmers, millers, and vagabonds who smuggled grain, flour, and stolen horses into Philadelphia, then occupied by Howe's army, during the same months in which American troops at Valley Forge were barely surviving extreme cold and near-starvation. The three were tried and sentenced to die, but because of jurisdictional irregularities George Washington refused to sign the death warrants, ordering instead another trial. The second trial again condemned the prisoners to death; Washington once more intervened, pardoning Rode on grounds of mental incompetency, but on March 16 Mansin and Meyer were hanged in Lancaster. Christopher Marshall laconically recorded in his diary that "Henry Marson [*sic*] and Wendal Myers . . . confessed at the gallows that they were guilty of stealing and procuring horses for Howe's army."<sup>60</sup> Thus, in nearby Lancaster, within a short period of less than two months, the British spy and the American traitor were arrested, deposed, tried twice, and executed.<sup>61</sup>

To set into clearer perspective the exceptional vindictiveness with which Batwelle was persecuted, we need only contrast his protracted and cruel imprisonment with the repeated leniency accorded Dr. Henry Norris. Daniel Shelly named Norris as one of the conspirators who had accompanied Batwelle when he supposedly visited him near the end of July or first of August 1777. Batwelle certainly knew Norris, for in support of the latter's claim for compensation after the war Batwelle personally testified to the intensity of Norris's commitment to British interests. In language remarkable for its freedom from the formulaic predictability we find throughout almost all other letters of "certification" in the Loyalist claims, Batwelle

wrote of Norris that "his conduct was always loyal—madly so[,] indeed, much beyond the bounds of Prudence."<sup>62</sup> Indeed, reading Norris's memorial, we can easily appreciate what Batwelle intended. From the spring of 1776, when he entered into association "with about 500 of his loyal Neighbours for the purpose of cooperating with his Majesty's Forces as opportunity should offer," down to 1781 when Cornwallis's entrapment on Virginia's York Peninsula prevented his sending troops and supplies to assist Norris's planned march on Lancaster to "seize the Rebel Guard, release all the Prisoners there, set fire to the Magazines and Public Buildings," Norris tirelessly organized Loyalists in southcentral Pennsylvania to prepare for the long-awaited British incursion over Susquehanna. He traveled numerous times through the dangerous territory between the western frontier and British lines bearing crucial communications, and he was arrested on that frontier no less than three times, freed on the first occasion "by a general Order of Congress," on the second "discharged by M<sup>r</sup>. Washingtons order."<sup>63</sup>

Apprehended in New Jersey the third time in March of 1778, he was "tried for his life by a Rebel Court Martial [in Pennsylvania] and sentenced to pay a fine of £50 Currency and to receive a hundred Lashes." Once again, however, Washington intervened and "in lieu of the lashes ordered him to a months hard labour."<sup>64</sup> Caught red-handed, as it were, three times, and transparently guilty of a host of treasonable acts, Norris escaped execution each time and was repeatedly and surprisingly turned loose to continue fomenting plots against the American government. The leniency accorded a repeat offender like Norris was more the norm than the exception. Young has carefully documented that in contrast to many other states and despite the harsh policy the radical Constitutional Party advocated, truly severe punishment was relatively rare in Pennsylvania. In part this was due to inefficiency, but more often the explanation for "mildness" must be sought in the judicial tradition itself. As Young notes, "Fortunately for political offenders, in Anglo-American law the enforcement of penalties was still controlled by the broadly merciful practice of punishment *in terrorem*. Imprisonment was impracticable, extreme penalties were barbarous and likely to invite reprisals; the tendency therefore was to find some excuse for clemency."<sup>65</sup> In contrast to this disposition toward leniency, the dangerously ill Batwelle was incarcerated for five months on dubious hearsay, with the weak federal government merely recommending greater leniency, not, as in the case of thrice-arrested Norris, mandating the humane solution it otherwise merely advocated for Batwelle. The great difference in treatment here intimates that Batwelle



had been singled out for especially harsh treatment and that, with no extant evidence to prove his participation in the conspiracy, he was targeted more because of his Anglican leadership than simply his never-proven Loyalist activities.

In the end, no trial came to pass, a circumstance that perplexed the long-incarcerated Shelly, whose pregnant wife was near delivery and whose daughter had been seriously bed-ridden for weeks with a fever ("her Life is despaired").<sup>66</sup> Almost two months after his arrest, in his second extant appeal, Shelly declared "that your Petitioner expected and believed the Persons accused by him of Practices inimical to the United States would have been taken up and tried at the last Court lately held in Carlisle; that he is now told that it is uncertain when those People against whom he is on evidence will be apprehended or tried."<sup>67</sup>

The record suggests that concrete evidence needed for Batwelle's trial was never found. The state had only the hearsay testimony of three witnesses, who were, moreover, most probably deeply into their cups at the time the climactic, damning scenario took place and who very probably repeated only local gossip or even accusations Cumberland County officials knew well to be bogus. If David Copeland ever made a sworn deposition, as did Shelly, Beckworth, and Laughlin, with whom he was apprehended, that testimony has been lost. And if Batwelle's personal papers, now presumably lost, contained unimpeachable proof of his participation in the conspiracy, it was never brought forth or cited.<sup>68</sup> Unable to prove his guilt, county officials simply sought to enhance their security and feed their vindictiveness by effectively keeping the Anglican cleric locked away from his adopted community, where he was particularly loved by his Christ Church congregation, virtually guaranteeing that he would, for as long as they could insure it, have no access to an environment conducive to his recovering his health.

As Daniel Roberdeau makes clear, Congress on the other hand feared making a martyr of Batwelle, and most probably in the very end so did Pennsylvania, but neither would the diehard Scots-Irish Presbyterian patriots centered in Carlisle and York easily set aside their earlier determination to avenge themselves on this representative of the hated Anglican clergyman. The SPG summary of Batwelle's five-month ordeal, in fact, intimates that the council might actually have intended its prisoner to die regardless of Congress's fear of his joining John Kearsley in martyrdom. "Contrary to all expectation he [Batwelle] survived" his ordeal in jail, the SPG document remarks in passing. The same summary clearly records that Batwelle had

already been seriously ill for two months before his arrest; officials in Carlisle and in York-town, where Batwelle ministered to two churches, would thus have certainly known of his condition when they descended on his house “in the middle of the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> Sept.” and dragged him away, sick-bed and all, in a wagon to York-town’s jail.<sup>69</sup> Only when he virtually reached death’s door, blind and unable to walk, and after—well after—Congress three times expressed its desire that Batwelle be accorded humane treatment, was the flimsily fabricated plot of treason eventually set aside or forgotten, and the English priest who would not conveniently die finally allowed the opportunity to escape the hell in which he had languished for five months.

Daniel Batwelle’s ordeal during the years 1776–78 sharply focuses the uncommon energy and coercive tactics employed against political dissenters who, because of religious conscience or political inclination, could or would not conform to the procrustean patriotic formula promulgated by backcountry radicals. Despite the clear provision in Pennsylvania’s 1776 Constitution that the state’s “indispensable duty [was] to establish such original principles of government, as will best promote the general happiness of the people of this State . . . and provide for future improvements, *without partiality for, or prejudice against any particular class, sect, denomination of men whatsoever* [emphasis added],” extreme patriots throughout the Commonwealth ignored this estimable ideal and enacted their own political agenda. Because of its intimate alliance with the Penn proprietary, its advocacy of an American episcopacy, its legacy of vaguely libertarian and latitudinarian principles, together with its historical opposition to Calvinistic intolerance, the Church of England and particularly its clergy came under concerted attack. In this, the radicals targeted Anglican clergy for several reasons distinct from their motives for mounting similar offenses against the presumed leaders of other religious groups such as the pacifist Quakers, Mennonites, and Moravians.

Frantically reacting to the crisis brought on by Britain’s successful invasion of Pennsylvania in 1777, and aided by the state’s subsequent suspension of habeas corpus, the radicals resorted to increasingly draconian acts, including entrapment, mob intimidation, sudden terroristic arrests during the very early hours of the morning, and protracted imprisonment without medical care of the seriously ill—tactics historians have documented, particularly in such back counties as York, Cumberland, and Northampton.<sup>70</sup> Professing to act on behalf of the people and in the interests of security, this political minority succeeded in imposing its collective will on individuals and groups whose beliefs and actions—ones frequently rooted in religious principles—it identified as challenging its newly won power.

That tireless commentator on American life during this period, St. John de Crèvecoeur, himself reluctantly driven to embrace Loyalism, aptly captured the coercive spirit of the backcountry patriots in his “American Landscapes” when he has his Deacon hypocritically preach of the new order to the Landlord.<sup>71</sup> “I have been told as how you used to be a pretty tight church-man,” the Deacon begins his attack upon the latter’s Church of England affiliation:

I hope these times will make a good Christian of you, and teach you to worship as we do, since your churches are shut up, and your priests have abandoned you all . . . now we are the favourite Christians, the defenders of liberty. . . . Hard times for poor Tories and churchmen, I must confess. . . . As people shake off the dust from their feet before they go into meeting, so must you and yours part with their old attachments and prejudices, or else they cannot enter into the New Jerusalem, that new temple of liberty so wonderfully reared in so short a time . . . ; bid fare-well to your kings, bishops, and monarchy. . . . You shall love the country such as we shall make it for you. . . . Mourn and bow down; your hope is cut off; you trust in a spider-web. You lean upon an old house; but it is falling . . . the Scriptures condemn you.<sup>72</sup>

As Pennsylvania’s Anglican clergy also recognized, the state’s ruling Presbyterian Constitutional Party would extirpate by any means possible, legal or otherwise, religious and political deviation from the ideals of its “new temple of liberty.”

## NOTES

1. Early in the war, the Loyalist governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, organized Loyalists residing mostly in the mid-Atlantic region into subversive militia and partisan groups to prepare their areas for invasion by British forces. Collectively, they were unified under the title “Associated Loyalists.” Lieutenant Colonel William Rankin of the York County militia secretly sought to unite Loyalists in southcentral Pennsylvania. For background on the Associated Loyalists, see Carl Van Doren, *Secret History of the American Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), 236–37 and 405–6.

Although the conspirators usually spoke of destroying the arsenals, as did their contacts on the British side, several also recognized that seizing the weapons stored there was an ideal way to obtain arms needed to mount an effective insurrection. Lieutenant John Wilson of the Queen’s Rangers and a former parishioner of Batwelle wrote General Sir Henry Clinton (c. 1781) that two lieutenant colonels in southcentral Pennsylvania secretly working for the Loyalist cause, “were rather inclined

to Seize then destroy the said Magazines as the Friends to Government knew of no other way to Arm themselves"; [John Wilson] to [Sir Henry Clinton], c. 1781, John Graves Simcoe Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The wording here is very similar to that in William Rankin's memorial to Lord George Germain, suggesting that Rankin, once a lieutenant colonel in the York County militia, was one of the two officers Wilson referred to.

Of the three arsenals, Carlisle's was most important. Rankin noted that "the Magazine, besides other Articles, contained between eight and nine hundred Tons of Gunpowder, ten thousand Stand of Arms, and a great number of Cannon." See Memorial of William Rankin to Lord George Germain, November 21, 1781, no. 2, Endorsed Address of the Associated Loyalists to the King, Copied for the Historical Society of York County; transcripts made by the Library of Congress, Public Record Office 5, vol. 1089, no. 157: 3. Robert G. Crist ranks Carlisle "near the top of the list of important ordnance and quartermaster bases in America." He notes that Carlisle was the site of a gunpowder factory, a munitions magazine, an artillery school, a quartermaster depot and commissary magazine, slaughterhouses, and artificer workshops. Together with its nearby satellite installations, the town produced iron pigs, cannon castings, cannon balls, and shot. In time, "Carlisle supplied the French forces at Newport, Rhode Island, and the Sullivan expedition into New York." Crist, "Cumberland County," in *Beyond Philadelphia: The American Revolution in the Pennsylvania Hinterland*, ed. John B. Frantz and William Pencak (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 130–31. Judith Ridner has also discussed Carlisle's importance as a military depot and manufacturing center in *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 130–37.

2. James Rankin, Lt. Col. William Rankin, Dr. Henry Norris, Alexander McDonald, John Faree, among them.
3. Daniel Batwelle to the President of the Congress, October 1, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives* (hereafter cited as *PA*), 2nd ser., 3:129–30.
4. Certificate of Dr. Jameson, October 1, 1777, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:133–34. The danger cited by Dr. Jameson, and later repeated by Dr. Robert Henry, was no rhetorical hyperbole; colonial prisons were notoriously unhealthy, and that in Carlisle one of the worse. See Ridner, *Town In-Between*, 127–28, for contemporary evidence of Carlisle prison's reputation. Dr. John Kearsley's death while a prisoner in Carlisle provides dramatic confirmation of this point. In his exhaustive study of Pennsylvania's efforts to deal with its large Loyalist population, Henry J. Young observes that the great suffering of prisoners and the high percentage of deaths of those imprisoned "resulted from the inefficiency of the infant government rather than from intentional cruelty. Colonial jails were unwholesome places, never designed nor intended for long-term incarcerations." Young, "The Treatment of the Loyalists in Pennsylvania," Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1955, 214. Batwelle's mistreatment, however, is a transparent instance of local intention to punish.
5. Congress to the President and Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, October 2, 1777, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:130.
6. Daniel Batwell to the President of Congress, November 7, 1777, *ibid.*, 3:141.
7. Daniel Roberdeau and W. Clingan to President Wharton, November 13, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:770.
8. Daniel Batwell to the Continental Congress, December 26, 1777, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1:153, National Archives.

9. [Certification of Dr. Robert Henry], December 26, 1777, *ibid.*, 1:157.
10. Saturday, December 27, 1777, in *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 9:1056.
11. Daniel Roberdeau to Vice President George Bryan, December 29, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 6:144.
12. Like Batwelle, Kearsley had petitioned county officials to “do what is Humane and necessary for the Honor” of rectifying the appalling conditions in which he suffered. Cited in Ridner, *Town In-Between*, 128. See also Anne M. Ousterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 112–20, for another account of the Kearsley affair.
13. *Journals of Congress*, 9:1056–57.
14. Roberdeau to Bryan, December 29, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 6:144.
15. Daniel Batwelle to Henry Laurens, Esq<sup>r</sup>., January 5, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, 2:329.
16. SPG summary, March 25, 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:313, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.
17. *Ibid.*, March 25 and July 10, 1778, 313, 363.
18. For Batwelle’s correspondence with André see the Clinton Papers in the Clements Library and for Batwelle’s letters to Sauer and Panton, see the George Panton Papers (Bernard Knollenbury Collection, M26, Box 4), Yale University Library, New Haven.
19. Memorial of Dr. Henry Norris, American Loyalist Transcripts, November 24, 1786, 50:108–13, New York Public Library, New York (hereafter NYPL).
20. Memorial of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Dan<sup>l</sup> Batwell, American Loyalist Transcripts, 1898–1903, 51:12, NYPL.
21. Although he was attainted as a traitor, the 200-plus acres of land near Carlisle he had received from the Penn proprietary was evidently never legally seized, as provided by law, nor had Batwelle obtained clear title to the land when the war broke out. To insure that title he claimed compensation for the loss, but later withdrew it until such time as his claim could be resolved. See George Stevenson to the Supreme Executive Council, February 12, 1780, *PA*, 1st ser., 8:107–8, for a wartime description of Cumberland County’s discovery of the ownership problem.
22. They had been careful, however, to obtain on their mittimus the signature of York County Justice of the Peace James Nailor. See Mittimus to Major James McCammont, September 30, 1777 (a “true copy” of the September 23, 1777, original), *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:128–29.
23. Samuel Johnston to the SPG, November 25, 1776, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:44.
24. *Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan’s and Captain Price’s Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1755 . . .* (Philadelphia, 1775), 20.
25. Within the Whig or Revolutionary party, Constitutionalists (so-called because they successfully labored to impose and then execute a new, repressive, antilibertarian constitution on Pennsylvania) represented the radical, diehard revolutionaries, while the more moderate Republican patriots advocated retaining Pennsylvania’s historical policy of toleration and civil rights, and, before the declaration of independence on July 4, tended to urge reconciliation with Great Britain, rather than separation.

A letter of June 30, 1775, signed by the Anglican clergy of Philadelphia and addressed to their superior, the bishop of London, and written in the literary style of William Smith, provost of the College of Pennsylvania, succinctly summarizes the dilemma confronting the Pennsylvania SPG

missionaries after Congress “recommended” July 20 “as a day of Fasting, Prayer & Humiliation thro’ all the Colonies.” The missive clearly sets forth the difficult choices besetting the Anglican missionaries: “should we refuse [to use the pulpit to instruct “our People”], our Principles would be misrepresented, and even our religious usefulness destroyed among our People. And our complying may perhaps be interpreted to our disadvantage in the Parent Country. . . . We were the more willing to comply with the request of our Fellow-Citizens, as we were sure . . . that they did not even wish any thing from us inconsistent with our characters as Ministers of the Gospel of Peace. . . . Such being our Persuasion, we must again declare it to be our constant Prayer . . . that the hearts of . . . men . . . may be directed towards a Plan of Reconciliation, worthy of being offered by a great Nation, . . . and . . . accepted by a People sprung from them, and by birth claiming a Participation in their Rights.” Cited in Edgar Legare Pennington, “The Anglican Clergy of Pennsylvania in the American Revolution,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 63 (1939): 413–14. Of the Philadelphia clergy, Jacob Duché, Thomas Coombe, and William Stringer eventually became Loyalists. Among the rural clergy, the Reverend Alexander Murray of Reading, Pennsylvania, offers a notable exception to the pervading spirit of compliance in July 1775. See William Pencak, “Out of Many, One: Pennsylvania’s Anglican Loyalist Clergy in the American Revolution,” in *Pennsylvania’s Revolution*, ed. William Pencak (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 116–17, for an account of Murray’s resistance to the radical patriots and the reaction of his overwhelmingly patriotic congregation to his fasting day sermon. See also Alexander Murray to the Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, May 1778, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:187–88; and Memorial of Alexander Murray, American Loyalist Transcripts, November 28, 1786, 50:137–44, NYPL.

26. Pencak, “Out of Many, One,” 100–106. In this they were presumably following the direction their congregations had indicated. On July 4, 1776, Jacob Duché asked his vestry “whether it was best ‘for the peace and welfare of the congregation, to shut up the churches or to continue the service, without using the prayers for the royal family.’ The vestry responded that ‘for the peace and well being of the churches,’ the prayers should be omitted” (Pencak, “Out of Many, One,” 100–101). Pennington has shown that, unlike the rural clergy, the clerics in Philadelphia “were under the direction of local vestries, rather than that of a foreign missionary society,” as was the case with the “parochial clergy.” Pennington, “Anglican Clergy of Pennsylvania,” 412–13.
27. James Bracken (of today’s Centre Mills, Butler Township), John Wilson (on the Bermudian Creek boundary between Huntington and Tyrone Townships), and John Curry (of Abbottstown).
28. SPG Summary, March 25, 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:314. The term takes its name from one of the large creeks that flows through the settlement.
29. Memorial of John Wilson, American Loyalist Transcripts, 51:92, NYPL. For praise of Wilson, see John Graves Simcoe’s *Military Journal*, repr. in *Queen’s Rangers: John Simcoe and His Rangers During the Revolutionary War for America* (n.p.: Leonaur, 2007), 230–32, 237–38. Simcoe’s frequent praise for Capt. John Saunders’s company also reflects on Wilson, who was a lieutenant in that unit.
30. James Bracken did not survive the war, dying in 1778. There is thus no Loyalist claim to consult for knowledge of what precisely drove him to flee his home in then Menallen Township. For more discussion of Bracken and the possibility that he committed suicide to avoid being attainted a traitor (which would have prevented his family from inheriting his estate), see James P. Myers Jr., “The Bermudian Creek Tories,” *Adams County History* 3 (1997): 13–18.

31. Samuel Johnston to the SPG, November 25, 1776, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:45.
32. See, for example, Van Doren, *Secret History of the American Revolution*, 132–33; and Pencak, “Out of Many, One,” 113.
33. For additional discussion of the seizure of power by the radical, antilibertarian Constitutional Party, see David Hawke, *In the Midst of a Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971); Robert L. Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776–1790* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1971); Owen S. Ireland, “The Ethnic-Religious Dimension of Pennsylvania Politics, 1778–1779,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 30 (1973): 423–48, and *Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics: Ratifying the Constitution in Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); and Ousterhout, *A State Divided*.
34. In respect to this point, Owen S. Ireland, “The Crux of Politics: Religion and Party in Pennsylvania, 1778–1789,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 42 (1985), has written that the Presbyterian radicals “first attacked their old enemies (Quakers and Germans) with the Test Acts and then turned on their former Anglican allies” (472). For a discussion of the rise (1764 to 1776) of what became the Presbyterian/Constitutionalist party, see Nathan Kozuskanich, “‘Falling under the Domination Totally of Presbyterians’: The Paxton Riots and the Coming of the Revolution in Pennsylvania,” in *Pennsylvania’s Revolution*, ed. Pencak, 7–35.

More pointedly, David L. Holmes, recognizing the Anglicans’ “reverence for authority and respect for legal orderly change,” stresses as well their “fear of the Revolution as a Calvinist plot to abolish Anglicanism in the colonies. . . . This fear is especially seen in those colonies where a royal defeat would leave Anglicans at the mercy of a Calvinist state and church. In such colonies Anglican clergy and laity tended to see specific parallels between the American Revolution and the Commonwealth period, when English Calvinists not only beheaded the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury but also abolished Anglicanism for Calvinism.” “The Episcopal Church and the American Revolution,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 47 (1978): 273–74. Also see Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 34, 309–10.

35. Young, “Treatment of Loyalists in Pennsylvania,” 74. Two more recent studies have focused on the “local” dynamics of Tory persecution: Francis S. Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Ordeal of the American Revolution in Northampton County, Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); and Liam Riordan, *Many Identities, One Nation: The Revolution and Its Legacy in the Mid-Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
36. Ridner, *City In-Between*, 116–20.
37. See James P. Myers Jr., *The Ordeal of Thomas Barton: Anglican Missionary in the Pennsylvania Backcountry, 1755–1780* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2010), 62–68, for a discussion of this early conflict.
38. Records of the Warrington Friends’ Monthly Meeting, the York County Historical Society, record Copeland’s early association with the Quakers; see entries for July 20, 1754; November 24, 1756; June 11, 1760; and April 11, 1761.
39. Daniel Shelly, a resident of Lancaster County and arrested in Lancaster County, was taken to Carlisle where he was deposed and imprisoned for several months. This jurisdictional irregularity suggests how deeply the Cumberland County patriots were involved in the plot against Batwelle and begs the question of what might have happened to Batwelle had he been imprisoned not in York (where Congress was meeting), but in Carlisle.

40. Affirmation of Daniel Shelly Concerning Rev. Batwell[e], September 22, 1777, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:126.
41. See 259–60 below for contemporary assessments of Shelly's character.
42. John Carothers to William Henry, September 25, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:634.
43. For a detailed discussion of Pennsylvania's persecution of Barton, see Myers, "The Rage of the Times," in *Ordeal of Thomas Barton*, 133–47.
44. For more on Dr. Henry Norris, who had moved to York County from New Jersey, see below, 261–62. "Mr. McDonald" would be Alexander McDonald, a British deserter, who as early as 1776 was scheming "to raid the Carlisle works and burn the stores." Crist, "Cumberland County," 128. See also Van Doren, *Secret History of the American Revolution*, 221–22.
45. Affirmation of Daniel Shelly Concerning Rev. Batwell[e], September 22, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 3:127.
46. John Rankin (of Newberry Township, York County), a brother of James and William Rankin, assisted British prisoners held in York to escape, for which "he brought upon himself the hatred and Resentment of the Rebels, [and] was obliged to fly for Refuge to the Kings Army then at Philadelphia." *American Loyalist Transcripts*, 25:139, NYPL.
47. Deposition of Wm. Beckworth and Adam Laughlin, September 6, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:624, 625.
48. *Ibid.*, 5:624. The wording "where Col. Buckhannan and his party were . . ." prompts one to complete the phrasing "were waiting [to apprehend Shelly and the others]."
49. George Stevenson to William Henry, September 25, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:635. Roland Bauman defines George Stevenson as a "paradoxical" figure, a quality he recognizes in the subtitle to his biography, *George Stevenson (1718–1783): Conservative as Revolutionary* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1978). During 1777, Stevenson was evolving from his earlier Proprietary-based moderation into a radical patriot. Thus, his ambiguous political affiliation in 1777 might have disinclined the long-entrenched radicals from involving him fully in their extralegal, antilibertarian plot.
50. George Stevenson to President Wharton, December 15, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 6:95.
51. Supreme Executive Council to Alexander Nesbit, September 16, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:628–29.
52. Supreme Executive Council to John Creigh, &c., *ibid.*, 5:629.
53. Edward Burd to Jasper Yeates, September 8, 1777, *Yeates Papers (Correspondence, 1762–1780)*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
54. Lily Lee Nixon, *James Burd: Frontier Defender, 1726–1793* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), 166.
55. *Ibid.* Both Nixon and Edward Burd preserve the misreading *Shelby* for *Shelly*. Burd's narrative makes clear, however, that his *Shelby* is the same as *Shelly*.
56. Mittimus to Major James McCammont, 3:129.
57. Daniel Roberdeau and W. Clingan to President Wharton, November 13, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:770.
58. To date, assuming that by the slenderest of chances they have survived the centuries, I have been unable to locate the papers.
59. Resolutions of Congress, 1777, October 6, 1777, *PA*, 1st ser., 5:647.
60. *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall, 1774–1781*, ed. William Duane (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1969), 172.



61. See Oliver S. Sprout, "Tories at the 'Dutch' Mill," *Papers of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 56 (1952): 36–44, for details of the Rein's mill conspiracy.
62. Daniel Batwelle to the Loyalist Claims Commission, American Loyalist Transcripts, 50:119.
63. Memorial of Dr. Henry Norris, 50:112–13, 109.
64. *Ibid.*, 50:110.
65. Young, "Treatment of the Loyalists in Pennsylvania," 344. See also his later article "Treason and Its Punishment in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 90 (1966): 287–313. Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, generally agrees with Young's assessment.
66. Daniel Shelly to Congress, October 16, 1777, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:136.
67. Daniel Shelly to President Wharton, October 27, 1777, Carlisle, *PA*, 2nd ser., 3:139.
68. Additional explanations for the failure to try Batwelle might also be considered. For example, Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, points out that Pennsylvania's court system at this time was not "functioning properly because lawyers who opposed the new Pennsylvania constitution led a 'deliberate sabotage' of the courts, refusing either to practice or to accept office. . . . This opposition and the general confusion due to the British invasion and occupation of Philadelphia from September 1777 to June 1778 kept all the courts from operating fully until the fall after the British evacuation" (279–80).
69. SPG Summary, March 25, 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:315, 314.
70. See, for example, Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, for examples in Northampton County. Ousterhout's *State Divided* cites numerous instances throughout the state and, although focused on the Delaware River Valley, Riordan's *Many Identities* also provides useful material.
71. Although difficult to pin down because of the numerous personae or masks he deployed, Crèvecoeur seems to have anticipated the kind of quasi-anarchism later embraced by such New England writers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Lysander Spooner. The flight into Indian country planned by James in the final chapter of *Letters from an American Farmer*, "Distresses of a Frontier-Man," dramatizes rejection of both Patriot and Loyalist causes—"a plague o' both your houses!"
72. St. John de Crèvecoeur, "American Landscapes: Third Landscape: At a Tavern," *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America: More "Letters from an American Farmer,"* ed. Henri L. Bourdin, Ralph H. Gabriel, and Stanley T. Williams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 274–76.