

# Pennsylvania History

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*This issue of Pennsylvania History is dedicated to the memory of George M. Leader, the state's only governor who has been a long-time member of the Pennsylvania Historical Association.*

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*On the cover:* Henry Mercer tile, number 29, "Blowing the Dinner Horn," part of the floor tiles of the Grand Hall at the Pennsylvania Capitol Building.

THE QUAKER CUNNING FOLK: THE  
ASTROLOGY, MAGIC, AND DIVINATION OF  
PHILIP ROMAN AND SONS IN COLONIAL  
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

*Frank Bruckerl*

*F*or nearly one hundred years, academia has paid considerable attention to those travesties of justice that took place in and around Salem, Massachusetts, in the seventeenth century. Although New England's witch-hunts were decidedly horrific, they alone do not solely demonstrate the complexity of colonial America's love-hate relationship with esoteric ideology. In fact, similar crises of justice and faith were occurring at roughly the same time in colonial Pennsylvania. For whatever reason, the birthplace of liberty has been shamefully overlooked in this decidedly peculiar area of judicial and religious history. Although popular culture has awarded Massachusetts the distinction of being recognized as America's "witchcraft capital," it was Pennsylvania's earliest practitioners of the mystical arts who quietly fostered the archetype of the American "cunning man." Much like their European brethren, these hybrid practitioners of the occult arts often paired the esoteric worldview of the Renaissance magus with the practicality of the traditional sorcerer.

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Such a philosophical synthesis was well known to Philip Roman (~1645–January 11, 1730). It was even better known to his two sons, Robert and Philip Jr., who became embroiled in a controversy that would ultimately test the faith of an early Quaker province. As the Christian eschatology of the Society of Friends collided with the importation of various esoteric techniques, the brothers would come to find themselves with a definite reputation of possessing forbidden knowledge. With such gossip reaching a fever pitch, tongues began to wag about Robert's disruption of fellow colonist Henry Hastings's marriage, possibly with the perception of magical interference playing some role. By proxy (at least by Quaker reckoning) all of this led to their father's assumption of a certain, if indirect, guilt. Consequently, both secular and Quaker authorities in colonial Chester County joined forces for a full-fledged inquest.

That inquest began on November 11, 1695. The Friends' Monthly Meeting Minutes record "some friends having a concern upon them" in regards to some "young men" who "came amongst friends to their meetings" who stand accused of "following some arts which friends thought not fit for such as profest truth to follow." The concern, in particular, calls attention to matters such as "astrology," geomancy, chiromancy, and necromancy. As a whole, the practices were said to bring "a vaile over the understanding and a death upon the Life."<sup>1</sup> Though "astrology" perhaps requires little explanation, it is noted that the other offenses (real or imagined) run the spectrum of divination—with geomancy being something loosely akin to a Western version of the *I Ching*—palm reading, and holding an audience with spirits. At this time, both common parlance and Quaker philosophy would have equated "necromancy" with something quite close to black magic; indeed, later court records pertaining to the controversy substitute one of the word's well-known variants, *negromancy*, which translates more literally to such.<sup>2</sup> It should be pointed out that the creation of a link between magic and blasphemy is a recurring theme in certain similar cases during the colonial period, at times those in neighboring states.<sup>3</sup>

If these accusations seem unusual, then their context might only be described as extraordinary. Lying just beneath the surface of this mystically tinged drama, which was now only beginning to unfold, we find a number of oddly synchronistic circumstances paired with a small sampling of a "who's-who" in early Pennsylvania. In truth, the accusations may owe most of their substance to the identities of the individuals involved, many of whom were

wealthy and well educated. At least some of these names will undoubtedly prove familiar to scholars, but their context here must be considered unique.

Mapping these curiosities requires some background on the elder Roman himself, who, before finding himself entangled amidst accusations of magic, divination, and necromancy in the New World, hailed from Lyneham, Wiltshire (England). Roman was a first-purchaser in colonial Pennsylvania, obtaining 250 acres from William Penn in April of 1681, which was finally surveyed on February 23, 1683.<sup>4</sup> The land purchased was in Concord Township, Delaware County, appearing in Thomas Holme's Map of the Improved Parts of Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup> A shoemaker by trade, he seems not to have resided on the land in question, instead living on a nearby farm along Chichester Creek.<sup>6</sup> When arriving home sometime in 1682, he was accompanied by his wife Martha and the couple's eight children. Martha and three of the children died that same year, leaving Philip (and five hungry mouths) alone in the fledgling province.<sup>7</sup>

In a testament to the hardiness of the early American spirit, Roman triumphed against these incredible hardships and became a significant figure in early colonial Chester County. We see him involved in municipal development that ultimately furthered the success of the early settlement: for instance, in 1687 he was appointed as supervisor of highway development in the area between Chichester Creek and Namans Creek.<sup>8</sup> Later, part of his own land ended up involved in a highway construction project, and in 1701 he became a trustee of the land purchased to build a county prison in Chester.<sup>9</sup> His success afforded him the privilege of becoming known by none other than William Penn himself, being mentioned by Penn in a charter given to the Borough of Marcus Hook in 1701. Here, Roman was appointed as a warden of the annual fair and weekly market.<sup>10</sup>

Three years after the death of his wife Martha, Roman married Sarah Coole, the widow of William Bezer. The handling of Bezer's estate seems to have created some problems for Roman: a Chester County Orphans' Court record from 1689 relates that "Phillip Roman was Called 3 times butt making noe appearance it was ordered that a Warrant be Issued out to y<sup>e</sup> Shreife to apprehend him and to Carry him before y<sup>e</sup> next Justice of y<sup>e</sup> Peace for this County in order to give an account why he doe not per forme y<sup>e</sup> Order of y<sup>e</sup> last Orphans Court." The next morning (following an adjournment of the court), Roman does, in fact, appear. He "was ordered to bring in a Copy of y<sup>e</sup> Enventory of y<sup>e</sup> Estate of his Prediceasor W<sup>m</sup> Beasar to Satisfie this Court

what is Become of y<sup>e</sup> Estate of y<sup>e</sup> Disceased.”<sup>11</sup> Despite the legal maneuvering, Roman seems to have been a decent enough suitor to warrant two more marriages in his lifetime, realizing a grand total of four wives after all was said and done.<sup>12</sup>

The year 1690 saw Roman wed Amy Kingsman, widow of one John Harding. Both Amy and John were “among the first settlers under Penn.”<sup>13</sup> Amy had a brother, John Kingsman, who, as it will be described shortly, later crossed paths with Roman on somewhat unfavorable terms. It may have been Roman’s marriage to the distinguished Kingsman that propelled both the wealth and stature of the former, giving way to even further accomplishments in what was now a bustling colonial career. Having been described as a “Constable of Chichester” in 1687, and after fulfilling duties in that regard, he ended up becoming involved with politics as an Assembly member in both 1692 and 1695.<sup>14</sup> These early careers in both law enforcement and politics would later see him gravitate toward judicial duties, serving as a justice of the peace in 1698 and 1703.<sup>15</sup> A judiciary career, in particular, seems quite apropos for Roman, as he served as a juror several times between 1688 and 1690.<sup>16</sup> Approximately five years later, in both 1694 and 1695, he graduated to serving as foreman.<sup>17</sup>

Personally, Roman went on to acquire further land of his own—in 1701, we see records reflecting the conveyance to him of some 1,000 acres, all of which he received through the family of John Harris, a fellow Englishman from Wiltshire who had purchased 1,500 acres some thirty years prior (in 1681).<sup>18</sup> Such acquisitions were not confined solely to Chester County, as records indicate that Roman also delved into the Philadelphia real estate trade. In 1702 he obtained 170 acres in Philadelphia County, followed by two city lots in 1704.<sup>19</sup> Needless to say, the sum of all of these purchases clearly demonstrates Roman’s significant interest in the development of the early colony. The specific real estate acquired (and the sheer breadth of scope) makes it clear that in colonial times the properties would have amounted to a considerable land portfolio.

Having discussed his secular achievements at length, it should also be noted that Roman held a significant presence in the Meeting Minutes of the Chichester/Concord Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends, and also appeared within the Minutes for the Chester Quarterly Meeting.<sup>20</sup> Careful examination of the original Minutes reveals an incredibly close-knit Christian community with Roman’s own estate sometimes playing host to the meetings themselves. Perhaps even more noteworthy is the fact that his name

appears at the top (or near the top) of attendance lists transcribed alongside the monthly recaps of local affairs.<sup>21</sup> The rationale behind Roman's careful placement on these lists is uncertain, but one could speculate that it was linked to his strong socioeconomic standing, or that it reveals a possible inclination toward punctuality. Alternatively, it could have been that Roman (or even a close associate) frequently acted as scribe. No matter the cause, the effect is such that Roman's name is one of the most prominent throughout the Monthly Minutes for the years in question.

When the controversy began on November 11, 1695, Philip Roman was still married to Amy Kingsman, and it was her brother, John, who was one of two men ordered by the Friends on that day to ensure that Philip (and sons Philip Jr. and Robert) would appear at the next monthly meeting. Assistance was to be provided by one William Hughes, who, like John Kingsman, ties back to the Roman family in an interesting fashion. Chester County court records indicate that he (as "William Huews") was involved with Philip Sr. in a real estate transaction also involving John Bezer (Sarah Coole's nephew from her previous marriage to the late William Bezer) on June 10, 1695.<sup>22</sup> Also mentioned is a transaction involving John Bezer representing (as counsel) his sister Frances (therein described as "ffrancis Bezer"), in deeding Philip Roman some forty-two acres on 02-09 mo. 1694 (November 2, 1694).<sup>23</sup> In both cases, land seems to have been deeded by these parties to Philip Roman, which raises the question as to what exactly was going on—it is again noted that Roman took William Bezer's widow, Sarah Coole, as his second wife in 1685.

One wonders if these transactions (and Hughes's subsequent involvement in the accusations surrounding the Roman family) had anything to do with a disagreement regarding the handling of Sarah's estate.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, John Kingsman's presence seems unusual given his distinction as Roman's brother-in-law. Such speculation aside, there was nonetheless an intricate web of personal and professional proximities between Kingsman, Hughes, and the Roman family. These circumstances afford the possibility that some mixture of these parties comprised the individuals described in the Minutes dated 11-09 mo.-1695 as having "a concern upon them," having already clearly ascertained that Philip Jr. and Robert were at least two of the "young men" that the Friends were so concerned with!

At the next monthly meeting (which ultimately fell on December 9, 1695),<sup>25</sup> we see that the efforts of Kingsman and Hughes apparently bore fruit, if only to a certain extent. Philip Jr. and Robert were "spoak to about

those Arts and Sciences” and “seemed to disowne w<sup>t</sup> is Mentioned except Astroligy.” To this end, the Minutes indicate that “much was said unto them But it was not Received.” Consequently, the youths pitched the idea (or were perhaps more likely steered) to “Confer w<sup>th</sup> Nicolus Newlin and Jacob Chandler,” and if this pair “could convince them y<sup>t</sup> it was Evill they would Leave it.”<sup>26</sup>

Like Roman, Newlin also served as a justice of the peace for a time.<sup>27</sup> Not unlike Kingsman and Hughes, he also had some involvement in previous Roman family business. An early Orphans’ Court record from 1689 indicates his fostering the children of one William Oborn—children who had previously been under the care of Edward Bezer, presumably the brother of William Bezer.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, this links Newlin to William Bezer, and his widow (later Roman’s second wife), Sarah Coole. It was perhaps not wholly by chance that the Oborn hearing took place on the same day that the court chose to address the previously mentioned controversy pertaining to Philip Roman’s interest in the estate of William Bezer. Coming full circle, Roman would go on to marry Dorothy Clayton on February 18, 1714. Not only was she the daughter of one of Roman’s former real estate partners, she was Edward Bezer’s granddaughter, and thus presumably Sarah Coole’s niece.<sup>29</sup>

Jacob Chandler, for his part, was also involved in the matter concerning William Oborn’s children, tasked by the Orphans’ Court in assisting Newlin with creating an inventory of the Oborn estate. In this case, the goal of the parties in question appears to have been to get the bulk of the property into the hands of its rightful owner, William’s daughter, Mary. Given the considerable set of correspondences outlined above, it is interesting to see Newlin and Chandler (much like Kingsman and Hughes) teaming up just over six years later in regards to the accusations of magic, divination, and necromancy that we find surrounding Philip Roman and sons.

On December 11, 1695 (just two days after Newlin and Chandler were ordered to speak with both Philip Jr. and Robert), we find Robert alone facing formal charges in the Chester County court. He stood accused not only of “practising Geomancy According to hidon and Divineng by A sticke,” but also of “Takeing the wife of Henry Hastings Away ffrom her husband and Children and Convaying her Away.”<sup>30</sup> It may be no small coincidence that the bereaved Hastings can be tangentially linked to Salem, Massachusetts. Hastings has been suggested as a probable passenger on one of three vessels arriving in the late 1670s: namely the *Kent*, the *Willing-Mind*, or the fly boat *Martha*. These ships carried numerous members of the Society of Friends,

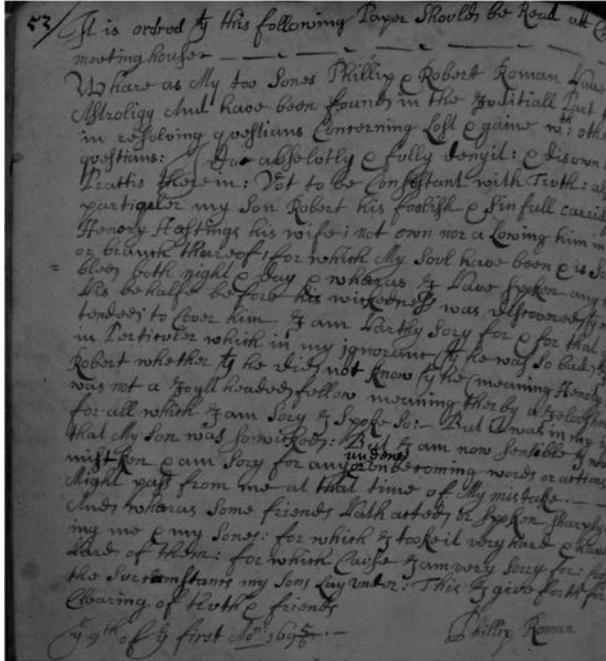


FIGURE 1: Portion of the handwritten Minutes from the Chichester/Concord Monthly Meeting from 09-01 mo.-1695/6 (March 9, 1696), held at the home of Robert Pyle, relaying a formal apology from Philip Roman Sr. for his sons' alleged misdeeds. Photographed by the author at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

some of whom were on their way to Salem.<sup>31</sup> If Hastings was indeed on board, the connection would provide a shared human element between the incidents at Salem and the Roman controversy. What are the odds that the victim of a “cunning man” like Robert Roman would have traveled alongside those headed toward what later became the site of America’s most infamous witch trials? Some common cultural or physiological basis seems quite possible.

Furthermore, Robert’s company during this initial hearing was particularly curious, for he was presented not alongside his father or brother, but instead with one Ann Buffington—wife of Richard Buffington—a woman who was previously (in 1689) accused of adultery, an accusation that led to her receipt of “10 strips upon her bear backe well laid on and 12 months Imprisonment att hard labor in y<sup>e</sup> house of Correction.” Whereas the accusations against

Robert Roman seem to have been based on mostly hearsay, Buffington's earlier trial had the salacious eyewitness testimony of "a man and a Woman lying upon y<sup>e</sup> Ground and y<sup>e</sup> man lying Upon y<sup>e</sup> Top of y<sup>e</sup> woman."<sup>32</sup> As a curious aside, one of the cases in which Philip Roman Sr. presided over as a juror saw the court rule in favor of Ann's husband, Richard. This case took place on 08-05 mo.-1689, and appears to have involved monies owed to Buffington by one Samuell Baker.<sup>33</sup> Although seemingly unrelated, it bears mentioning if only to illustrate the fact that members of the Roman family were, at least somehow, previously acquainted with the Buffingtons.

Without speculating on whether or not Roman was the "other man" in 1689, the strangeness of his accompaniment by Buffington (paired with the anecdotal evidence above) might not be wholly coincidental. It is worth noting that one Walter Marten served as foreman for both Buffington's adultery matter and Roman's divination case. What Ann Buffington's involvement was with Robert Roman (and by proxy, Henry Hastings) remains uncertain, but it seems clear that there *was* involvement to some extent. Her reputation aside, an appearance with Robert Roman seems to create more questions than answers. This is because the accusations against Roman are more esoteric than mundane. To bolster their case, the "Grand Inquest" even presented works by Reginald Scot, John Heydon, and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (possibly pseudo-Agrippa),<sup>34</sup> all of which were evidently culled from a search of the Roman household. Perhaps Buffington's presence was not based on past or present sexual indiscretions, but instead a suspected common knowledge of the occult arts. When Buffington was presented as being "Confederat" with Roman, there is a very real possibility that the court was in the formative stages of framing her as Chester County's first "witch."

What Roman's business was with the wife of Henry Hastings also remains unknown—one could speculate that the accusations of impropriety stemmed from Roman "carrying on" with Mrs. Hastings, or that perhaps the controversy was the result of a preconceived notion that the Roman brothers were privy to occult knowledge on how to disrupt a marriage. In the case of the former, it is easy to see how the suggestion of magical interference may have served to mitigate the shock of plain old infidelity. If the latter was sincerely suspected, it could have been easily attributed to any number of rites or incantations, some of which would have been found in the very books uncovered during the aforementioned search of the Roman estate.<sup>35</sup>

Following the first portion of Robert's trial, on 13-11 mo. 1695 (by Gregorian standards, January 13, 1696), the Minutes report that Newlin

and Chandler did, in fact, speak to the Roman brothers “according to their proposall.” The long story made short is that Philip seemed quite agreeable, alleging that he had already turned down several individuals who sought him out for his astrological prowess or, in the words of the Friends, those who “came to him to be resolved of their Question already.” For his part, Robert “promised the same but with this reserve unless it was to Doe some great good by it from w<sup>ch</sup> believe of some great good may be Done by it wee could not remove him.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, Philip alleged that he had quit astrology altogether, whereas Robert *insisted* on still practicing (at least in those cases in which he felt that he could provide definite help). Reading between the lines, the existence of a cottage industry of magic and occultism in colonial Pennsylvania is essentially confirmed. Not only do we find two “fortune-tellers” in the Roman brothers, so too do we find the existence of a steady customer base.

The next month, on 03-12 mo.-1695 (February 3, 1696), we find a *Testimony* to be read at all Monthly Meetings under the Quarterly Meeting’s jurisdiction.<sup>37</sup> The piece unequivocally attacks any and all occult practices, even going so far as to order Friends to “bring in all books that relate to those things,” so that they may be “disposed of as Friends shall think fit.”<sup>38</sup> It also draws particular attention to the practice of “Rabdomancy or consulting with a staff,” which may have been an early Quaker interpretation of the practice of dowsing. Biblical allegory is used to suggest the severity of such transgressions, though if the “fear of God” proves not strong enough a deterrent to the local Quaker population, the inference is made that secular, judicial charges in the Chester County court will ultimately result. Although the early county court was Quaker in all but name, we find it being used here for a very distinct type of saber-rattling. More interesting still, it is as if the authors of this decree realized that their religious authority only went so far, but that they could nevertheless send the matter up the chain with very little difference in effect. Even before independence reigned in the Americas, there seems to have been a separation between church and (soon-to-be) state, with one major caveat: the church (or in this case, the Society of Friends) was able to harness the power of the state as desired. Hence, the separation was merely theoretical.

Any doubt regarding the Friends’ stance on astrology, divination, and magic was now laid to rest: such practices were wholly taboo, and legal consequences would be the norm. One might infer that the belief structure within the Society of Friends was more complex than the Society would have cared

to admit, with its mandated doctrines demonstrably modified by the Roman brothers, supplemented by books of ill repute. In particular, the writings that were allegedly discovered during the search of the Roman estate were quite instructional in nature.

For example, the tail-end of pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* matches the description provided by the Grand Inquest almost perfectly, and contains explicit directions toward a practice of necromancy.<sup>39</sup> While it is possible that only this chapter of the full volume was unearthed, the instructions therein may be counted among the work's most macabre. Seeming to draw upon a repertoire of personal experience, the author explains that "the souls of the dead are not to be called up without blood, or by the application of some part of their relict body. In raising up these shadows, we are to perfume with new blood, with the bones of the dead, and with flesh, eggs, milk, honey, and oil, and suchlike things, which do attribute to the souls a means apt to receive their bodies." He continues to explain that "the souls of the dead are not easily to be raised up, except it be the souls of them whom we know to be evil, or to have perished by a violent death, and whose bodies do want a right and due burial."<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Agrippa's musings on necromancy are but one part of a volume that molds the real Agrippa's earlier *Three Books* into a more legitimately workable form,<sup>41</sup> and their appearance here may suggest that Robert Roman was no mere small-time peddler of fortunes.

So too does that of John Heydon's *Theomagia, or the Temple of Wisdome*. Like the *Fourth Book*, Heydon's work also has characteristics that indicate it as the literary output of a practicing adept. For one, the author appears to have been quite well connected, and among the several introductory remarks by his colleagues, we find that even George Starkey (alchemist-extraordinaire of the early Americas) was of some acquaintance.<sup>42</sup> Truly, Starkey's literary cameo in the work assists in substantiating the spiritual undertones of colonial alchemy as a whole. It also affords an intellectual link between the Romans' and various early American spagyricists.<sup>43</sup> Innocent associations such as these may have unwittingly lent a perceived credibility to the early conspiracy theory of Quakers using alchemical concoctions (or "Quaker-Powder") to help ensure success while proselytizing.<sup>44</sup>

Of particular relevance to the accusations at hand, the first main section of *Theomagia* begins with four brief chapters detailing the creation and applied use of geomantic figures, the fifth containing charts demonstrating how Heydon believed those figures might be tied to the "seven Rulers of

the Earth” and their “twelve Genii or Idea’s.” The book’s three sections are equally comprehensive, offering a quite thorough blend of Rosicrucianism, Hermetic Qabalah, and astrology. Keeping with our theme of practicality, instructions on both planetary and astrological talismans are also provided.<sup>45</sup>

Reginald Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, also confiscated from the Roman household by the Grand Inquest, was a scathing critique of occult practices in general. Making reference to the methods of torture and execution employed by Inquisitors, he advocated a more balanced approach to dealing with practitioners of magic, whom he saw as “sillie soules.”<sup>46</sup> Despite his aims, Scot’s attempt at persuasion would become one of the earliest and most exhaustive catalogs of occult rites in existence. The work provides concise descriptions of various charms, lists of spirits, and even methods of conjuration; and enterprising “cunning folk” like the Roman brothers could have easily reverse engineered the material into workable form. Knowing that the early court specifically accused Robert Roman of practicing geomancy along the lines of Heydon, the implications of his possession of the *Discoverie* are even more considerable.

His choice of books notwithstanding, Robert stubbornly refused to stop providing consultations to his fellow colonists on the basis that his services could help, not harm. This raises the question: were the Quakers more concerned with Roman’s mystical practices, or the *implications* of those practices? After all, if people like Robert Roman had a direct line to the divine, then what need be there for a Society at all? The call for books to be destroyed may have been an attempt to ensure that the Society maintained some semblance of control and order over an increasingly inquisitive and literate populace. Extramarital affairs and occult rites represented a great threat to Quaker values, and the Society of Friends now found itself locked in a battle of wits with the very constituents who it had hoped would help solidify its presence.

In response to this perceived threat (and, judging from previous Minutes, at the Chichester Monthly Meeting’s behest), Philip Roman Sr. produced a written statement (or “paper”), dated 09-01 mo.-1695/6 (March 9, 1696), which was ordered to “be read at Chester Meetinghouse.” This statement decries “astrology” and esoteric practice in general, paying special attention to Robert, whose actions are described as “foolish & sinfull.” Here, the elder Roman apologizes and admits to a “mistake.” The wording in this apology seems to *preemptively* reference Robert (the next day) being found guilty by the judicial court, a curiosity that might be attributed to either an error in primary source dating, or perhaps the fact that an unofficial verdict was

steadily making its way through the grapevine. Even at this eleventh hour before Robert Roman's hearing, William Hughes and Jacob Chandler were again tasked with urging him and Philip Jr. "to indeavour in the wisdom of god to bring them to a Sense of their condition and to give forth a paper to condemn their practys therein."<sup>47</sup>

The next day, on March 10, Robert Roman was fined five pounds by judicial authorities and ordered to "never practis the arts but but [sic] behave himselfe well for the future." Ann Buffington, who (as noted) was previously summoned to the bench with Roman, was conspicuously absent, and court records indicate that upon being called, an "Answer was made she was Ill and Could be not be heare."<sup>48</sup> Although ordered to appear at the next court, the record includes no such return by Ann. Presumably, her involvement was deemed marginal enough to let the matter drop, though it is odd that the court seems never to have followed through with her sentencing.

Although the Minutes indicate that Robert was disowned by the Quakers on 11-03 mo.-1696 (May 11, 1696), the matter remained unsettled. The reference



**FIGURE 2:** A sundial crafted by Philip Roman, Quaker resident of the Province of Pennsylvania (Chester County), inscribed to Henry Warinton [Warrington]. Photographed by the author at the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

to his disownment is terse, but in effect indicates a spiritual parting of ways. Nonetheless, all of the secondary sources available seem to overlook the chatter within a Monthly Minutes entry dated 08-12 mo.-1696 (February 8, 1697), suggesting that the Chichester Meeting had persisted in a certain hope that Robert would come back to their fold, by way of a written apology not unlike that of his father. The meeting was held (remarkably enough) at the house of John Kingsman, and the Minutes claim that there “was a Paper Presented to this meeting by Robert Roman” and that the Meeting ordered the already discussed Will Hughes and a man named Will Browne to speak with Robert concerning said paper “betwixt this & y<sup>e</sup> next monthly meeting.” It remains unclear if this actually happened, as on 08-01 mo.-1697 (March 8, 1697), the Minutes indicate that “Robert Romans paper is refered untill the next m<sup>o</sup> meeting.” On 12-02 mo.-1697 (April 12, 1697), it is recorded that “Robert Romans paper being considered; this meeting ordereth Robert Roman to read the paper” with “his being present at the reading there of.” Robert’s level of cooperation thereafter is uncertain, but the Meeting evidently felt these developments significant enough to note in their record.

For his part, it seems that Philip Sr.’s handling of the matter satisfied the Friends, as he was one of six men especially appointed in 1699 to choose a place for the Friends Meeting that ultimately became known as the Middletown Meeting (established in or around 1702, constructed atop what was previously land set aside for Quaker burial). Here, too, we see Roman holding a certain prominence: he is listed before all of the other appointees, and although this was certainly not uncommon for him (as discussed earlier), it does help demonstrate that his standing among the Quakers perhaps remained unscathed following the conclusion of that peculiar controversy, which only a few years earlier seems to have placed Roman in a very uncomfortable position indeed.<sup>49</sup>

At least from a historical perspective, it seems that it was business as usual for Philip Roman. Although the Quakers had remained wholly resolute on getting to the bottom of those accusations that had landed Roman and his sons in hot water to begin with, we might assume that time was perhaps too valuable in early provincial Pennsylvania to waste on holding grudges—and it is quite literally time that seems to have become, in some way, inextricably linked to Roman’s legacy.

It would take hundreds of years for this missing piece of the puzzle to emerge. On November 23 and 24, 1911, the Historical Society of Burlington County presented an exhibit of privately held artifacts in Moorestown, New Jersey.

The exhibit's catalog reveals an item of particular relevance, one that belonged to exhibitor no. 42, Henry W. Moore, of Moorestown, NJ.<sup>50</sup> The item was described thus:

Sun dial, with name of Henry Warinton and date 1726, made by Philip Roman, engraved on it. Henry Warrington was born in England and came to Philadelphia in 1700, bought 400 acres of land in Chester Township and married Elizabeth Ansten in 1719.<sup>51</sup>

What happened to the sundial following the Burlington County exhibit remains uncertain for approximately eighty-one years. In 1992 it appeared at the Chester County Historical Society, where it resides at the time of this writing.<sup>52</sup> The piece is made of brass with a diameter of some six to seven inches; it is curiously decorated with celestial patterns and, quite fittingly, Roman numerals. It is marked with the name "Henry Warinton" and the year "1726"—both carefully etched in a calligraphic hand within a quadruple-banded ring surrounding an image of the radiant sun. On the farthest edge that points away from the gnomon, we find the inscription "Philip Roman Fecit." The gnomon is highly decorative, with flowing edges in the rear, and the device as a whole is quite remarkable. This is no crude timepiece, and is clearly the work of someone who was quite proficient in the craftsmanship of fine metals.

While that "someone" could have certainly been Philip Roman Sr., it is perhaps more likely the work of his son and namesake. This seems more probable given that Philip Sr. was presumably over eighty years old in 1726. He would pass away approximately four years later, with his last will and testament providing well for his loved ones.<sup>53</sup> The timeline is such that although it is not outside the realm of possibility that the elderly Roman could have created the sundial, it seems more likely that the timepiece would be the work of his son.

Although Philip Roman Sr. appears (for the most part) to have remained in the areas surrounding Chichester (after his arrival in Pennsylvania), we know that the younger Philip ultimately made his way back to England. Correspondence from May of 1697 and in April of 1700 suggests that Philip Jr. was there on family business. He went on to become a doctor, being referenced as such by his nephew and in documents pertaining to the estate of his wife, Mary.<sup>54</sup> He died at the age of sixty in 1730 (the same year as his father), which would have made him approximately fifty-six years old at the

time of the sundial's creation.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of whether it was father or son responsible for the making of the sundial, the device perhaps reveals itself as the culmination of its maker's interest in astrology, an interest that may have been spurred by the very books that caused such a stir over thirty years prior. If indeed crafted by the hands of a physician like Philip Jr., this particular sundial serves as the crossroads upon which colonial mysticism and early science converge.

At the time of the Roman trial, such roads were yet to be completely mapped out. In 1694 Philip Roman Sr.'s daughter, Martha, married Isaac Taylor, who was a physician and land surveyor, known to be well versed in mathematics.<sup>56</sup> Like Roman and almost all of the individuals discussed thus far, Taylor also called Chester County home. This, paired with his mathematical expertise, undoubtedly helped ensure his later receiving the title "Deputy Surveyor" of Chester County. One of his most significant achievements was working with Thomas Pierson of New Castle to map out the Chester County border with Delaware. For their work (which was completed on December 4, 1701), the duo was compensated by way of twenty-six pounds, nine shillings. This amount was paid after some debate by Chester County officials, who, on February 24, 1702, ultimately released the funds.<sup>57</sup>

Isaac's brother, Jacob Taylor, was also a land surveyor and mathematician, and it is he who provides us with yet another link to colonial Pennsylvania's esoteric underground. Adding to an already impressive family repertoire, Jacob was a prolific almanacker. The periodicals which he somewhat fervently published seem to have escaped the scrutiny wrought upon his extended family, despite housing content leaning toward astrology and other esoteric doctrines. The volumes were typical for their time, containing (in parts) calculations and poetry penned by Taylor himself, though such was not the entire extent of his literary career.<sup>58</sup> In 1687 he published his *Tenebræ*, a work that demonstrates a certain interest in astrological matters, serving as a twenty-year calendar for both solar and lunar eclipses.<sup>59</sup> Given his interests (and evidently close proximity to the Roman family), it may well have been Jacob's influence that led to the Roman brothers becoming what we may safely call "cunning men." Also, in consideration of the processes involved in the surveying of land, the hint of dowsing, seen in the Quarterly Meeting Minutes dated 03-12 mo.-1695 (under the guise of rhabdomancy), seems quite plausible.

We might also attribute the Romans' procurement of works by pseudo-Agrippa, Heydon, and Scot to Taylor's connection with the book trade.

We know, for instance, that he was involved in the sale of hundreds of rare books, perhaps sent to him on consignment from England. There is also evidence suggesting that he was the custodian of an early library.<sup>60</sup> The few historians who have researched the Roman case seem to have thus far overlooked these crucial links. In order to understand the transmission of any type of esoteric knowledge, one must first trace the steps of those so-called forbidden books. Clearly, Jacob Taylor provides such a link, being involved on all levels of their authorship, production, and distribution. It is even possible that the very books discovered by the Grand Inquest during their search of the Roman estate came from Taylor directly. Books were his business, and the Romans had become extended family just one year prior to the discovery. More specifically, there is an interesting correlation between Taylor's occasional habit of quoting Agrippa in his almanacs with the Grand Inquest's confiscation of works by pseudo-Agrippa from the Roman estate.<sup>61</sup>

While it is true that the popular consumption of almanacs such as Taylor's reflects a certain flavor of adventure and mystique common to life in the early province, the Roman brothers' knowledge, understanding, and even procurement of esoteric philosophy far exceeded what one might otherwise expect of the casual observer. Although we don't know if their practices ran the full gamut of those explained in the seized literature, we do know that they stem from a demonstrably shared font of knowledge. For his part, Taylor seems to have eventually grown tired of the public's dwindling perception of the mystical arts. The 1746 edition of his almanac "denounced all occult practices," a considerable revision to his previous approach.<sup>62</sup> In this way, Taylor shared something in common with many colonial almanac makers: the authors of such publications often demonstrated a certain flexibility of tact as their respective periodicals struggled to incorporate new thought and also compete in the marketplace.<sup>63</sup>

Martha Roman's marital link to the Taylor family might even serve to explain the existence of the Philip Roman sundial. In his analysis of Taylor's *Tenebræ*, Keith Arbour hinted at the possibility that the metal-line engravings found in the work could have been executed by the author himself.<sup>64</sup> It should also be noted that the Taylor family ended up in the metal business later on, as Isaac's son, John, opened Sarum Forge in Glen Mills in or around 1740.<sup>65</sup> There is also an indication that none other than Jacob Taylor himself lived at the forge later in life.<sup>66</sup> Even though Sarum Forge was not yet open for business at the time the sundial was created, we can

probably assume that the family knowledge of metalworking would have been sufficient to create the piece, or that the Taylors may have somehow passed along bits of their metallurgic knowledge to Philip Roman Jr. (or perhaps even his father).

However, the minutiae surrounding the question of whether father or son was responsible for the artifact's existence is a red herring for its more significant cultural context. Ironically, it is the passing of time itself that could most distinguishably claim credit for the piece's very existence. Noting the philosophical evolution of popular culture in eighteenth-century America, Peter Eisenstadt observed that many early Americans "remained attached to some forms of magic, while at the same time proclaiming their allegiance to the principles of the Enlightenment."<sup>67</sup> In the end, the sundial itself serves as a sort of daguerreotype for the slow development of colonial America's mainstream demystification. Even in the absence of a windowsill and a clear sky, this colonial clock "tells time" with a certain profundity that its maker presumably never even intended—and therein lays its true charm.

The Roman brothers themselves also possess a certain unique hallmark that makes them a rare breed among even the more magically minded of their colonial peers. Their familiarity with the work of various earlier and then-contemporary "adepts" being duly noted, the young men defy academic characterization.<sup>68</sup> Even if one assumes that our subjects were self-taught, the historical record demonstrates the careful implementation of a classically trained yet practically minded occult regimen. Perhaps above all else, it is this sense of nonconformity that makes the case so very intriguing.<sup>69</sup>

Although such a praxis might otherwise be dismissed as mere curiosity (or perhaps a youthful rebellion against the colony's primary religious establishment), a connection to Jacob Taylor shows that they were not mere "dabblers" in the magical arts. Likewise, an analysis of the meticulous records kept by their Quaker brethren reveals that the Roman family contained at least two of America's very first "cunning folk." In great contrast to the stereotype of the early American witch trial, we find no women accused of poisoning wells, no vigilante justice, and much to the Quakers' credit, no "burning at the stake." What we do find is that same brand of stubbornness that helped ensure the success of the early settlement at Chester County, and which less than a century later would contribute to the birth of a nation.

## NOTES

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1. See J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, *The History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with Genealogical and Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1881), 413; also Concord (formerly Chichester) Monthly Meeting Minutes 11-09 mo.-1695. November 11 was the eleventh day of the ninth month by Quaker rationale, which at the time considered the "new year" to begin on March 25.
2. The Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, *Record of the Courts of Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1681-1697* (Philadelphia: Patterson and White Company, 1910), 364 (hereafter *RCCC*).
3. See Jon Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage, 1600-1760," *American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (1979): 344.
4. Craig W. Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: 1710-1756*, vol. 2 of *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 652-54. Although this work suggests that Roman was also known as "Philip Rakeing" in England, careful examination of early colonial source material points to "Roman" as being the correct surname.
5. Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 209. Thomas Holme was the surveyor-general of William Penn, and this map is the earliest in existence of the Province of Pennsylvania (or Pennsylvania Colony) in British America.
6. For an exhaustive, if curiously placed, account of the Roman family tree, see Joseph S. Harris, *The Collateral Ancestry of Stephen Harris, Born September 4, 1798 and of Marianne Smith, Born April 2, 1805* (Philadelphia: George F. Lasher, 1908).
7. *Ibid.*, 174.
8. 3d day in the 2d Weeke of ye 2nd moth 1687: "ffrancis Chadsey Supervisor of ye High wayes between Chichester Creeke and Namans Creeke returnd all well whereupon Phillip Roman was ordered in his roome for ye ensuing year," *RCCC*, 90-91.
9. Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 37, 351.
10. Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 173.
11. Excerpted from events transpiring on October 3 and 4, 1689; *RCCC*, 168-69.
12. For a complete list of Roman's wives (along with his date of marriage to each), see Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 174-78. In brief: 1: Martha Harper (~1669); 2: Sarah Coole, widow of William Bezer (January 5, 1685); 3: Amy Kingsman, widow of John Harding (June 26, 1690); 4: Dorothy Clayton (February 18, 1714). Harris notes that Ms. Clayton was "quite a young woman," and the niece of Sarah Coole, Roman's second wife.

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13. Gilbert Cope, ed., "William Hitchcock to John and Amy Harding, 1687," *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 4, no. 1 (1907): 72.
14. 3d day in the 2d Weeke of ye 2d moth 1687: "Phillip Roman Constaple of Chichester returned all well whereupon Nathaniell Lamplue was ordered Constaple in his roome for the ensuing year"; *RCCC*, 90-91.
15. John B. Linn and William Henry Egle, eds., *Pennsylvania Archives* (hereafter *PA*), 2nd ser., vol. 9: *Record of Pennsylvania Marriages, Prior to 1810*, vol. 2 (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, 1880), 676, 683.
16. *RCCC*, 126, 186, 192, 203, 207.
17. *Ibid.*, 334-36, 354, 358.
18. William Henry Egle, ed., *PA*, 2nd ser., vol. 19: *Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (Harrisburg: E. K. Meyers, 1890/1893), 299.
19. Egle, ed., *PA*, 3rd ser., vol. 3: *Old Rights, Proprietary Rights, Virginia Entries, and Soldiers Entitled to Donation Lands, with an explanation of Reed's Map of Philadelphia* (Harrisburg: Clarence M. Busch, 1894/1896), 6-7.
20. These minutes are currently held in both microfilm and manuscript at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College; Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Prior to 1686, the monthly sessions took place solely in Chichester. However, on 02-06 mo.-1686 (August 2, 1686) it was mandated by the Chester Quarterly Meeting (which post-1800 has been known as the Concord Quarterly Meeting) that the meetings would henceforth alternate between Chichester and Concord on a monthly basis, until switching permanently to the latter in 1729. See Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 232.
21. See Concord (formerly Chichester) Monthly Meetings Minutes dated 09-12 mo.-1690 and 09-10 mo.-1695 (among others) for an example of meetings held in Philip Roman's home. Even prior to the controversy in question, the majority of Meeting attendance lists falling between these dates (and even others around the same time) give Roman's name a greater prominence than most, if not all, others.
22. William Bezer had a brother named John Bezer who died in 1684, leaving behind four children. Two of those children (John and Frances) are the parties here. For more biographical details, see Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 176.
23. Both transactions appear in sequence within the *RCCC*, 352.
24. "Sarah lived but a short time after her marriage to Philip Roman, and dying, about 1688, left her children to his care." Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 174.
25. 09-10 mo.-1695 under the Quaker dating scheme.
26. Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 413.
27. Linn and Egle, eds., *PA*, 2nd ser., vol. 9: *Record of Pennsylvania Marriages*, 675-76, 744.
28. 3d day in ye 1st weeke of ye 8th moneth 1689: "Ordered att ye request of Robert Pile that Nicholas Newland doe Succed Edward Beasar Disceast in ye gaurdionship of William Oborns Children and that ye said Nicholas and Jacob Chandler Doe vew and make up an account of ye Estate of ye aforesd Diceast Wm Osborne in order to Render unto the Diseaseds Daughter Mary Osborne (who is now arrived to age) the Just proportion of her sd Disceast ffathers Estate And that ye sd Jacob Chandler and Nicholas Newland in persuance Hereof have Power to call Anne ye Reliquit of ye

- Disceat Edward Beasar to an account in order to take ye effects of ye Disceat Wm Oborns out of her hand," Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, *Record of the Courts of Chester County*, 169.
29. Roman's name appears on a piece of land in Philadelphia County alongside one "Wm. Claiton," presumably William Clayton Jr. See 16-09 mo.-1703 in *Old Rights, Proprietary Rights*, 13. Dorothy Clayton's connections to Bezer and Coole are outlined by Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 178. The reader is cautioned as some of Harris' dates pertaining to the Clayton family remain inconsistent with those of Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 498.
  30. *RCCC*, 363. Note that "hidon" presumably refers to John Heydon, a seventeenth-century proponent of Rosicrucian philosophy.
  31. Also thought to be aboard one of these ships (in this case, the *Kent*) was William Clayton, father to William Clayton Jr., Philip Roman's future real estate partner and eventual father-in-law. See Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 16, 498.
  32. *RCCC*, 157-58.
  33. *Ibid.*, 186-88.
  34. For this distinction in particular, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 528, and Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage," 333.
  35. December ye 11th 1695: "wee the Grand Inquest by the kings Authority Presents these ffollowing Books Hidons Temple of wisdom which Teaches Geomancy And scots Discovery of whichcraft And Cornelias Agrippas Teaching negromancy: Walter Martin fforeman: The Court orders that as many of sd books as can be found be Brought to the next Court"; Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, *Record of the Courts of Chester County*, 363-64.
  36. Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 413.
  37. Chester (Concord) Quarterly Meeting Minutes dated 03-12 mo.-1695 (actually February 3, 1696).
  38. This resembles the practice of the Inquisition, one decree of which insisted that "all written incantations existing in the Holy Office should be burned; and if the trials have been terminated, mention should be made of the combustion." See John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 229-30.
  39. Despite bearing an attribution to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, the proper authorship of the full volume (a compendium of sorts) remains uncertain. Although the real Agrippa authored an included tract on geomancy, the portion of the volume self-designated as the *Fourth Book* proper carries no such provenance. Other appendixes are known to be drawn from other sources altogether. See Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *The Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, trans. Robert Turner and ed. Donald Tyson (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009), 1-3.
  40. *Ibid.*, 103.
  41. The distinction is a substantial one, not lost on the author of the work itself, which states that "the reader is informed that by the study of the *Occult Philosophy* he will acquire knowledge of occult matters, but by the study of the *Fourth Book* he will learn how to actually apply them to his triumph." *Ibid.*, 118.
  42. For more on Starkey, see William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chymistry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 92-205.

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43. Such as the storied New England colonist John Winthrop Jr., who was known to combine alchemy with the practice of medicine. Winthrop's circle "understood alchemy to be a progressive, intellectual, immensely utilitarian but simultaneously spiritual undertaking of the utmost importance," Walter W. Woodward, *Prospero's America: John Winthrop, Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 16.
44. See comments regarding the volume *Dissertatio Historico-Theologica de Philtres Enthusiasticus Angelico Batavis* by Amelia Mott Gummere, *Witchcraft and Quakerism: A Study in Social History* (Philadelphia: The Biddle Press, 1908), 32-33. Here, Gummere indicates that one such substance was said to induce a "trembling or quaking state."
45. See John Heydon, *Theomagia, or the Temple of Wisdome in Three Parts: Spiritual, Celestial and Elemental* (London: Henry Brome, 1664), 11-15, 205-72.
46. Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London: Elliot Stock, 1886), xxv.
47. Concord (formerly Chichester) Monthly Meetings Minutes dated 09-01 mo.-1695/6. Mentioned only in passing within secondary sources, the record of Philip Sr.'s "paper" is pictured as figure 1.
48. *RCCC*, 369-71; also summarized in Gummere, *Witchcraft and Quakerism*, 42-43.
49. See 06-09 mo.-1699 transcribed by Futhey and Cope, *History of Chester County*, 233: "The ffriends of John Bowaters meeting Lay their Intentions of Building a meeting house. This meeting constitutes & appoints Philip Roman, Robert Pyle, Nathaniel Newlin, George Robinson, John Hood & John Wood to determine the place for that service and make report to ye next Quarterly meeting under all their Hands that it may be entred in this meeting Book." Futhey and Cope are more thorough in listing these "six Friends," who are also referenced in Charles Burr Ogden, *The Quaker Ogdens in America: David Ogden of Ye Goode Ship "Welcome" and His Descendants, 1682-1897, Their History, Biography, and Genealogy* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1898), 42.
50. This catalog, which was originally sold for twenty-five cents, is currently available in digital format via the Internet Archive. See *Catalogue: Loan Exhibition of Historical Objects under the Auspices of the Historical Society of Burlington County-Moorestown, New Jersey, November 23d and 24th, 1911*, <http://www.archive.org/details/catalogue00hist>.
51. *Ibid.*, 22.
52. *Sundial, circa 1726*, "Owned by Henry Warrington, Gift of Anna and Deborah Warrington," exhibit no. 1992.645, Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.
53. A summary of the will appears in Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 178-79. Robert Roman's absence therein is presumably only because he passed away in January of 1718, some twelve years before his father's death. He was approximately forty-six years old.
54. *Ibid.*, 180-83.
55. Philip Jr. was born "about 1670" and died on October 10, 1730. *Ibid.*, 179.
56. *Ibid.*, 180.
57. For more on Isaac Taylor, see George Smith, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania: From the Discovery of the Territory Included Within Its Limits to the Present Time, with A Notice of the Geology of the County, and Catalogues of its Minerals, Plants, Quadrupeds and Birds* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1862), 206, 506; also Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 86-87.
58. Smith, *History of Delaware County*, 506.

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59. For a thorough examination of what survives of this fascinating manuscript, see Keith Arbour, "The First North American Mathematical Book and Its Metalcut Illustrations: Jacob Taylor's *Tenebræ*, 1697," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 123, nos. 1/2 (1999): 87–98.
60. See references to the Taylor papers in Harris, *Collateral Ancestry*, 84.
61. Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 82.
62. Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage," 340.
63. Regarding the latter point, one finds that "Almanac makers were sensitive to readers' complaints, for they knew readers could evaluate an almanac's accuracy through the evidence of their own senses." Sara S. Gronim, "At the Sign of Newtown's Head: Astronomy and Cosmology in British Colonial New York," *Pennsylvania History* 66, *Explorations in Early American Culture* (1999): 62.
64. Arbour, "Jacob Taylor's *Tenebræ*," 98.
65. Henry Graham Ashmead, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Co., 1884), 255.
66. See correspondence "For Jacob Taylor living at Sarum Forge," from *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 21, no. 1 (1897): 130.
67. Peter Eisenstadt, "Almanacs and the Disenchantment of Early America," *Pennsylvania History* 65, no. 2 (1998): 145.
68. Eisenstadt suggests that "Learned magic tends to be highly symbolic, while popular magic is often pragmatic and result-oriented." *Ibid.*, 150.
69. The Roman brothers are presumed to have been quite familiar with esoteric symbology, despite employing a very pragmatic *modus operandi*.

## THE BRITISH IN PITTSBURGH: POWS IN THE WAR OF 1812

*Ross Hassig*

Far from the Atlantic seaboard and the Canadian frontier, Pittsburgh was not expected to play a major role in the War of 1812. But it became involved in military affairs even before the start of the war, with Fort Fayette acting as a staging point for troops going down the Ohio River to more westerly posts, notably at Newport, Kentucky, opposite Cincinnati. After Congress declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812, troops marched from Pittsburgh to posts along the Canadian frontier in northern Ohio and Michigan.<sup>1</sup> For much of the war, too, Pittsburgh also played a little-known role as a prisoner-of-war (POW) depot for British soldiers and sailors.

The United States anticipated that many, if not most, of the British prisoners captured during the war would be taken from ships. The government therefore sanctioned holding prisoners of war at various seaports on the Atlantic coast and at New Orleans. These ports were designated in the opening months of the war, where all British prisoners were turned over to the US Marshals in their respective districts. Military prisoners were almost an afterthought in a nation that was poorly prepared for war itself. Depots for army and militia prisoners were not

officially established until 1813, almost a year after the war began. The first was to be at Schenectady, New York, but that location proved unsatisfactory and the army posts at Greenbush, New York, and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, were quickly substituted instead. This concentration of POW depots in the Northeast reflected the anticipated area of greatest army operations, along the border between Canada and New York, since the Great Lakes separated most of the remaining settled areas of the two countries.

Yet it was a naval victory, not a military one, that unexpectedly changed the situation in the west. Lake Ontario, between New York and present-day Ontario, was contested throughout the war, with both British and American fleets challenging each other for control. But Lake Erie farther west was also crucially important. Separating western Pennsylvania and Ohio from Ontario, both ends of the lake provided ready passage across the border. On the western side, Lake Erie provided crucial communications and supplies for the British posts on both sides of the border around Detroit and Amherstburgh. Overland supply was inadequate, so control of the lake was crucially important for holding these areas. The pivotal battle on Lake Erie occurred on September 10, 1813; under pressure to act, the British fleet of six ships commanded by Captain Robert Heriott Barclay attacked the nine ships of the American fleet commanded by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry. In the ensuing battle, Perry triumphed, capturing hundreds of British POWs. He then wrote Secretary of the Navy William Jones, reporting that two British ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop had surrendered to him. Perry's commander, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, similarly wrote Jones. Barclay reported that in the battle he had lost three officers and thirty-eight men killed, and nine officers and eighty-five men wounded.<sup>2</sup>

With the United States now controlling Lake Erie, Major General William Henry Harrison's forces were free to advance into Canada toward Amherstburgh. With their supplies and reinforcements now cut off, the British commander at Amherstburgh, Major General Henry Proctor, was unable to resist and began withdrawing to the east. Harrison caught up with him near Moraviantown. On October 5 a battle ensued at the River Thames between the American forces and the British and their Indian allies. During the battle, the Shawnee leader Tecumseh was killed, and over 600 British soldiers were taken prisoner.<sup>3</sup>

Both Perry's and Harrison's victories left hundreds of prisoners in American hands, with the nearest POW depot far to the east at Greenbush, opposite Albany. Marching hundreds of POWs for such a distance through

rugged and sparsely populated territory posed such serious logistical and security obstacles as to be impractical. Perry and Harrison therefore agreed to send their prisoners south, to Chillicothe, then the capital of Ohio, where there was a military command. Perry's prisoners would remain there, while Harrison's would continue on to Newport, Kentucky. Only those too seriously wounded or too ill to travel were exempted; these were to be sent to Pittsburgh.

After his victory on Lake Erie, Perry had landed his prisoners at Sandusky, Ohio, from whence they had been marched to Chillicothe to remain there pending orders from the secretary of the navy.<sup>4</sup> The British officers remained near the lake while Perry waited for orders from Jones, as he wanted to parole those with families back to Canada.<sup>5</sup> The British commander, Barclay, had been seriously wounded by grapeshot during the engagement, which rendered his right shoulder useless, although he could still bend his elbow and use his hand. The injury was especially hard on Barclay as he had lost his left arm earlier in his career. As a result, Perry promised he would parole him, and had so written Jones, acknowledging that it was the humane thing to do although he should have waited for orders from the secretary.<sup>6</sup>

When the war was declared, no formal agreement for the treatment of POWs existed between the United States and Great Britain. Nevertheless, general standards for POW treatment were recognized among the Western powers, and local arrangements were reached by various British and American commanders. Such agreements were limited to the areas and personnel under their authority. Neither the British nor American agents for prisoners of war met to negotiate a formal arrangement until April 1813.

The acting British agent for prisoners of war was Anthony St. John Baker, who had been the *chargé d'affaires* when the war was declared, and had been allowed to remain in Washington to serve in that capacity.<sup>7</sup> Receiving all his instructions from the departing British minister to the United States, Augustus Foster, Baker had no authority to negotiate a POW agreement on behalf of his government. So a formal agreement awaited the appointment of a permanent agent. A POW exchange agreement was, however, negotiated at Halifax, Nova Scotia, between the American agent for prisoners of war there, John Mitchell, and Richard John Uniacke, His Majesty's Advocate General for Nova Scotia, and ratified by the commanding admiral, Sir John Borlase Warren, but was limited to maritime prisoners and, in any case, was subsequently rejected by US Secretary of State James Monroe.<sup>8</sup>

Thomas Barclay (no relation to Robert Barclay) had been appointed to be the permanent British agent for prisoners of war in the United States in late 1812, but he did not reach Washington from London until early April 1813.<sup>9</sup> There he met with newly appointed American Commissary General for Prisoners of War John Mason, and the two men negotiated a cartel for the exchange of prisoners of war over the next several weeks.<sup>10</sup> Although it was not subsequently ratified by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in London, the cartel agreement of May 12, 1813, codified the terms of treatment for POWs, most of which were generally followed by both sides.

Among its provisions were the number and locations of POW depots, all except Schenectady being at seaports; the cartel agreement provided for none in the west. Thus, news that Perry and Harrison had sent their prisoners to Ohio, Kentucky, and Pittsburgh must have come as a surprise to Mason when his letters finally reached Washington. Correspondence from the West was slow to reach the capital, so it was two weeks after Perry's victory that Mason wrote Perry about the prisoners. Mason agreed that Perry should fulfill his promise to parole the wounded Barclay either to Canada or, if he was unable to return because of the continuing military campaign on Lake Ontario, to remain on parole in the United States somewhere he would be most comfortable and receive the best medical care. Perry was to provide the same medical care for the other wounded British officers and men, but Mason could not allow them to be paroled since the British had refused to release any American officers who were POWs in Canada for months and were treating them severely. Many of them had been sent from Quebec to the prison at Halifax on crowded ships, and the British were threatening to send the rest to prisons in England. Mason nevertheless approved of the decision to send the estimated 450 POWs to Chillicothe.<sup>11</sup>

Perry's prisoners were ordered to Chillicothe, including the officers, but the 97 wounded prisoners (54 seriously, 43 slightly) were sent to Erie, Pennsylvania, until they were well enough to travel. There they recuperated for nearly three months until December 27 when they were sent to Pittsburgh.<sup>12</sup>

Pittsburgh, a town of about 5,000 people, was unprepared for large numbers of prisoners; no arrangements had been made to receive, house, feed, or guard them. Mason's few instructions regarding the Pittsburgh-bound prisoners had been sent on November 19 to US Marshal of Pennsylvania John Smith at Philadelphia. Mason wrote that he assumed a deputy marshal had been appointed at Pittsburgh to oversee the prisoners.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the war, administrative dictates from Washington suggest a smoothly running POW establishment. But the reality on the ground was frequently far different. It was easy to order that accommodations, provisions, guards, and medical care be arranged for the prisoners, but actually doing so was far more difficult.

Fortunately, Marshal Smith had appointed a deputy marshal a year earlier, after Congress enacted a law on July 6, 1812, requiring all alien enemies (British subjects resident in the United States) to report themselves to the marshals. The United States was primarily concerned about British merchants in seaports who might pass intelligence to British ships. Nevertheless, as a major military transit point, Pittsburgh was also a concern, and Marshal Smith had accordingly appointed William B. Irish as deputy marshal for that purpose.<sup>14</sup> While his initial duties were relatively simple—collecting lists of enemy aliens and reporting those who failed to register themselves—the unexpected responsibilities toward POWs were enormous. Irish, however, proved to be a conscientious, though ultimately frustrated, man.

As soon as the decision was made to send the wounded prisoners to Pittsburgh, Mason informed Marshal Smith, who instructed his deputy at Pittsburgh to receive the POWs, provide them with rations, and consult with the military commandant about their safekeeping. He also enclosed a copy of Mason's letter and instructions.<sup>15</sup>

Irish replied to Smith on December 1 that no sick or wounded prisoners had been received in Pittsburgh, nor had there been any British POWs there since the declaration of war. There had been seven prisoners held since at least October, five white and two men of color. They had initially been confined at Fort Fayette, but on October 29 the commandant, Major R. Martin, ordered them removed, so Irish placed them in the county jail, where three of them escaped over the jail wall on November 30. As they had been placed in the sheriff's custody, Irish then instructed him to advertise for their capture.<sup>16</sup>

With no major federal prisons in the United States at this time, the marshals were typically dependent on town and county jails. Local needs, however, had priority, the jails were too small to hold large small numbers of prisoners, and their use depended on the willingness of municipal, county, and state politicians to comply with the government's request. This cooperation was often not forthcoming in New England, a region generally opposed to the war. This was not the case in Pennsylvania, but using local jails was nevertheless an undesirable alternative in the government's view since the federal government was charged the same rate to care for prisoners as the town

or county, which was often exorbitant.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, there was a marked preference for marshals to confine prisoners in army garrisons, especially when large numbers were involved.

To ensure compliance with the terms of the POW agreement, the British agent was allowed to appoint his own subagents at all POW depots. Barclay offered the position of subagent at Pittsburgh to a man apparently of his acquaintance, James Swearingen. Swearingen, a US Army captain, declined it, arguing that his duties required too much time. He did recommend another Pittsburgh resident, John Linton, and gave Barclay's letter and instructions to him. Apparently eager to be the subagent even before Barclay made a formal offer, Linton called on the senior British officer as soon as the POWs arrived and arranged for the prisoners' comfort.<sup>18</sup> Barclay followed Swearingen's recommendation and offered the position to Linton, who accepted on December 31, sent his accounts for the clothing supplied thus far, and asked what money he was to supply the prisoners per month.<sup>19</sup> A few months later, the United States decided that American citizens should not act as British agents, and Barclay accordingly notified Linton in April 1814. But it appears that at Pittsburgh, as elsewhere, Barclay ignored the US regulation, and Linton continued to serve until the departure of the prisoners.<sup>20</sup>

Even before he secured a subagent to report on conditions, and almost immediately on the arrival of the POWs at Pittsburgh, Barclay complained that the British prisoners had not been supplied with bedsteads, straw, cooking utensils, or enough fuel. The complaints must have come from the POWs and, in light of subsequent events, probably from John Kennedy, the surgeon of the 41st Infantry Regiment. Barclay's attitude, widely shared in British circles, was that all British assertions were true and all American statements were merely assertions requiring proof. As he typically did, Barclay then threatened to withdraw these items from the American prisoners held by the British if British prisoners were not properly cared for. It should be noted Barclay was a New York loyalist who had fled to Canada, his property was confiscated, and he had been attainted for treason by the state in 1779. In 1805 DeWitt Clinton had described him to then-Secretary of State James Madison as "very rancorous against our government."<sup>21</sup>

By early January, fifty-six more British POWs arrived at Pittsburgh, including two of the men who had escaped the jail on November 30. These men had been recaptured by Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott who had been conducting the British POWs to Pittsburgh, and he returned the men with the rest. Among the fifty-six new prisoners, none were officers and only thirteen

were in the Royal Navy, including the two escapees; the rest were army personnel, most from the British 41st Infantry Regiment.<sup>22</sup>

Irish received only three hours advance notice that so many men were en route, and with both the garrison at Fort Fayette and the jail already crowded, it was only with great difficulty that he was able to prevail on Major Martin, the commander at that fort, to take charge of them. Not unreasonably, Irish assumed that the military was obliged to secure prisoners of war in such cases, but Martin had received no such orders from his superiors and did not share that perspective. He soon ordered Irish to remove the British prisoners from the garrison, and with no room in the jail and few options Irish wrote Mason for instructions.

Making matters worse, Midshipman Samuel W. Adams informed Irish that still more POWs were now on their way from Erie, including officers. If they arrived, Irish wrote, he would have to build barracks to house the men and would need funds to pay the officers' allowances and other expenses.<sup>23</sup>

The usual practice at this time as codified in the cartel agreement was to confine the common men and provide them rations and necessary clothing. The officers were generally paroled within the confines of the town and given a cash subsistence which, at this time, was three shillings sterling per day per officer (calculated at four shillings six pence per American dollar). If they were not paroled—usually for some major infraction—they received no allowances and were provided with rations like the other POWs. On parole, however, the officers were expected to pay for their own accommodations in local houses or inns, and provide for their own meals.

Although confinement was usual for ordinary POWs, a fortunate few found alternatives. A British soldier at Chillicothe wrote to Henry Bakewell at Pittsburgh offering his services as an experienced glasscutter provided he could secure his parole.<sup>24</sup> Bakewell was a partner in the flint-glass manufacturing company of Bakewell, Page, and Bakewell on Water Street and managed to secure permission from Mason for the prisoner, Michael Myers, to come to Pittsburgh, promising to use the utmost vigilance to ensure that Myers would not escape, and to pay the reward for his apprehension if he did.<sup>25</sup> Benjamin Henry Latrobe, a Pittsburgh architect, also wrote to Mason, seeking to employ a carpenter from among the British prisoners. He too was given permission to employ the POW. He was to be paroled to remain within two or three miles of the place of his employment provided he wanted to be hired, and on the same terms agreed to by Bakewell, which included reporting each week to the marshal.<sup>26</sup> The arrangements were

apparently satisfactory as Latrobe subsequently sought permission to hire six more British POWs at Chillicothe.<sup>27</sup>

As elsewhere, the prisoners at Pittsburgh were allowed to send and receive letters, provided they were first read by the marshal. But Irish soon intercepted an objectionable letter sent by John Kennedy, surgeon of the 41st Regiment. Irish forwarded the letter to Mason since, he wrote, it contained false and impudent claims. Kennedy was, he reported, a troublesome prisoner; he acted outrageously en route to Pittsburgh, abused the midshipman who was conducting the POWs, and behaved very insolently to Irish, for which he was warned that he would be confined if he did so again. Kennedy was particularly upset that Irish refused to provide him with subsistence pay. Because British surgeons did not hold commissioned rank at that time, Irish treated him as a common prisoner.

To avoid more obnoxious letters, Irish gave the postmaster a list of those malcontents likely to write such letters so they could be intercepted; without orders from his superiors, however, Irish doubted the postmaster would comply. Nevertheless, he felt Kennedy might seriously injure the government if he were not restricted. None of the British officers sent letters that contained anything very exceptionable and were thus allowed to continue writing. Mason reproved Irish for not confining Kennedy, as failing to send uninspected letters was a parole violation, and instructed him to examine letters in the future for infractions. Barclay declined to defend Kennedy's conduct but nevertheless suggested, as usual, that the Americans were to blame.<sup>28</sup>

Irish later complained that Kennedy was "a very impertinent fellow and a most inveterate enemy to everything American and I have no doubt will give every information respecting this country should he be permitted to return." Nevertheless, Mason subsequently ordered that Kennedy was to be held as a noncombatant, and would be paid subsistence of one shilling six pence per diem for paroled nonofficers.<sup>29</sup>

Although commissioned officers were entitled to subsistence pay, until Irish received funds from Mason he was forced to house and feed the officers as well as the common prisoners. By January 9, 1814, eighty-five British POWs including officers were held at Pittsburgh, all at Fort Fayette. He was able to house them there only because the garrison's troops had been ordered to march to Erie, thus freeing the space. But other troops were hourly expected to arrive, and when they did, he would have to find some other place to house the prisoners.

Even though he did not have to pay the paroled officers their subsistence money while they were held at Fort Fayette, Irish had already incurred considerable expenses in housing and feeding the prisoners, but had received no funds from either Mason or Marshal Smith. Irish tried to arrange for rations from the army contractor at Pittsburgh, but he was refused because he did not want to comply with the rations specified in the cartel agreement as they differed from army rations. Irish therefore found a local man who would furnish the rations, but he expected to be paid monthly. The amount would be about \$440 per month excluding officers' pay, bunks, straw, fuel, and so forth. Irish accordingly sought instructions from Mason.<sup>30</sup> None were forthcoming, however, and Irish was left to his own devices.

Fort Fayette could not be a permanent residence for the prisoners. The local jail held some, but it was too small to hold them all, and many were crowded into it. When one of them, a black man, died, the doctor and citizens of Pittsburgh urged that the prisoners be removed to roomier accommodations. Otherwise, they felt, more would die and their diseases would spread to the town. Under these circumstances, Irish took it upon himself to order the construction of frame barracks to house the prisoners and guards in early April 1814. It was, he felt, either that or release the prisoners.

The barracks resolved Irish's housing problem, but not his difficulties in supplying and guarding the prisoners. Since the prisoners arrived, Irish had been chronically underfunded. His requests to Marshal Smith for funds for these purposes had similarly gone largely unanswered, as Smith too had great difficulties in securing funds from Mason. Irish therefore accepted personal responsibility for the accruing bills and had prevailed on friends for money, but he was now so far in arrears he wrote Mason that he refused to accept further responsibility either for the prisoners' supplies or safekeeping unless he received at least \$2,000 as soon as possible.<sup>31</sup> Irish was owed \$4244.57 for May alone, most of it for the cost of building the barracks.<sup>32</sup>

Mason's office had nominally received funds for the POW service, but reimbursements to all the marshals were slow. Marshals received little or nothing in advance, but were expected to send monthly accounts supported by appropriate vouchers. Mason was responsible to the Treasury Department for his funds, which was exceedingly slow in paying its bills. This often left marshals far in arrears and personally deeply in debt. In any event, Irish was chronically, even desperately, underfunded throughout his tenure at Pittsburgh.

Prisoner-of-war life was undoubtedly tedious. Roll call was taken each morning and evening, and the prisoners cleaned and maintained their own prisons. The prisoners were organized into six-man messes that were responsible for cooking the rations issued for each meal. Fighting, cursing, and gambling were all prohibited, at least in theory.<sup>33</sup>

Though monotonous, life for the prisoners at Pittsburgh was punctuated by events beyond their control. Almost as soon as the British were captured on Lake Erie, efforts began to exchange them. Barclay's initial proposal for an exchange was at first declined, but within weeks Mason agreed to exchange all the British POWs taken from the Canadian command for all the American prisoners held in Canada. The POWs at Chillicothe and Pittsburgh would be sent to Erie and embarked on vessels for Niagara or the nearest British post.<sup>34</sup> Despite this offer, Barclay argued that it was too late in the season to send the prisoners back. They would therefore continue to be held as POWs until the lakes opened the following spring.<sup>35</sup> The lakes were still open when Barclay wrote but by the time the POWs could be readied, even if the weather did not impede their march, the lakes would likely be frozen, rendering sailing too hazardous to attempt.<sup>36</sup> The Pittsburgh prisoners therefore remained confined throughout the winter of 1813–14. But further political events also delayed their anticipated spring release.

Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, governor and commander-in-chief of the Canadas, had sent some captured American soldiers to England in strict confinement to await trials for treason. These men were Irish immigrants and most, if not all, were naturalized American citizens, which the British refused to recognize on the argument that only the king could release British-born subjects from their natural obligations.<sup>37</sup> When President Madison learned of this many months after the men were sent to England, he ordered twenty-three British soldiers similarly confined to guarantee the safety of the soldiers sent to England.<sup>38</sup> The British were outraged at this and the Prince Regent escalated matters by ordering forty-six more American POWs confined, doubling the number of hostages held, and now focusing solely on officers.<sup>39</sup> The United States replied in kind and forty-six British officers were ordered similarly confined, which included those held at Pittsburgh.<sup>40</sup>

Barclay blamed the United States for the strict confinement that would befall the British officer POWs at Pittsburgh. He also declared that all exchanges would also cease, and he accordingly directed British POW Commander Edward Wise Buchan at Pittsburgh to inform the other British officers.<sup>41</sup>

In February Mason instructed Marshal Smith to confine the officers in Pittsburgh. They were to be arrested, confined, and their paroles suspended, which meant stopping their subsistence money and supplying them with rations like the other prisoners. Nevertheless, their rooms were to be supplied with brick stoves or fireplaces, beds, and furniture, and each field officer (i.e., major and above) was to be allowed one servant who would be confined alongside him. They were only to converse with visitors in the marshal's presence.<sup>42</sup> As the officers at Pittsburgh were already confined because little funding had reached Irish, the impact was relatively minor when Mason ordered the two lieutenants and two midshipmen at Pittsburgh confined on March 8.<sup>43</sup> Commander Buchan was not confined, having already died. He was buried in Pittsburgh, for which Barclay declined to pay, demanding instead that the cost be deducted from Buchan's personal effects.<sup>44</sup>

The hostage standoff eased when Prevost gave American POW Brigadier General William H. Winder a temporary three-month parole to the United States on his promise to try to persuade the American government to relax the retaliation. When Winder reached Washington, Secretary of State Monroe authorized him to negotiate a general release with Prevost. To reciprocate for Winder's parole, Mason offered similar short-term paroles to Canada to Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Warburton and his servant held in Kentucky. They were to travel by way of Pittsburgh and, from there, go by a circuitous route including Alexandria and Williamsburg, Virginia, to Niagara.<sup>45</sup> Mason soon offered similar paroles to three more British officers: Captains Muir, Chambers, and Crowther. These three were also to go to Canada via Pittsburgh, where they would be joined by surgeon John Kennedy and purser John N. Hoofman.<sup>46</sup>

Negotiations began between Winder for the United States and Colonel Edward Baynes, Prevost's adjutant general; an exchange agreement was concluded in April. Because of communication difficulties, the soldiers sent to England for trial were not included in this agreement and the United States rejected it. But in July 1814 an amended agreement was reached.<sup>47</sup>

All was not well with the Pittsburgh prisoners, however. Six died in the spring of 1814, including Commander Buchan.<sup>48</sup> A dozen prisoners also escaped, two from the jail, four from Fort Fayette, and the rest from the barracks, although Irish claimed all but four were recaptured.<sup>49</sup>

When word reached Pittsburgh that the prisoners were to be exchanged back to Canada, escapes accelerated. Escaped officers usually tried to return to their own side. But the same was not true of the ordinary sailors and

soldiers. When they escaped, it was rarely to their own side, fearing impressment or conscription. Instead, they fled into the interior of the United States and remained there.<sup>50</sup> So when word that British prisoners were to be sent to Canada reached Pittsburgh, another ten men escaped and were not recaptured.<sup>51</sup>

The release of POWs at Pittsburgh began early. Despite the US failure to ratify the initial exchange agreement, Mason ordered the release of some of the officers in Ohio and Kentucky, and all of those in Pittsburgh, in April. They were to be taken across the lake and exchanged near Fort George. At that time, Pittsburgh held seventy-five privates and noncommissioned officers and four officers.<sup>52</sup> This release was to be a short-term parole rather than an exchange, which obligated the prisoners to return. Some felt it was not worth the trip if they had to return so soon and declined the offer. One of the officers who did wish to return to Canada, Louis P. Johnston, was too unwell to travel, so he was removed to an airy upstairs room in the jailor's apartment in order to save his life. The other officers at Pittsburgh, however, decided to go provided Irish could furnish transportation.<sup>53</sup>

In accord with the initial exchange agreement, Prevost returned 300–400 prisoners to the United States before he learned that Secretary of State Monroe had rejected it. Based on that initial release, however, Mason ordered the release of 300 prisoners at Pittsfield to Isle Aux Noix and all 80 at Pittsburgh to be sent to Erie. Preparations were ordered begun for the journey, including traveling expenses.<sup>54</sup> At Mason's request, Secretary of War Armstrong ordered the guard at Pittsburgh to accompany the POWs.<sup>55</sup>

Irish reported that all the POWs would be sent on parole to Lake Erie under guard and there embarked for Canada on July 6, along with several women and children belonging to the prisoners.<sup>56</sup> But to do so, Irish required funds, as he needed to hire wagons for their baggage, for the infirm, and for the nine women and seventeen children who had accompanied the prisoners to Pittsburgh.<sup>57</sup> Mason had already authorized the money, and the next day Irish received \$1,000 from Marshal Smith.<sup>58</sup>

Irish also needed guards to accompany the prisoners but the militia Irish had been employing refused to go until they were paid. Furthermore, the lieutenant commanding them was near death and, even if he recovered, would be unable to go. Irish thus preferred a guard composed of regulars and expected the commander at Fort Fayette to furnish it. But when he requested one from the new commander, Colonel Hugh Brady, Brady declined, having

not yet received orders to provide it, as at this point, Mason had not yet made his request to Armstrong.<sup>59</sup>

An opportunity arose to send some of the prisoners back to Canada when Major Trimble arrived on the evening of June 3 with the paroled officers from Kentucky. But Irish would not be prepared to send the POWs to Canada for another ten or twelve days, and Trimble refused to wait longer than the sixth, as he felt the government did not wish to detain the officers. He nevertheless saddled Irish with additional expenses. Eight of the British officers who arrived with him needed horses since they had only hired horses in Kentucky to bring them as far as Pittsburgh. So when Irish wrote Mason for instructions and funds to pay for wagons, he also requested money for the officers' horses and subsistence on the march.<sup>60</sup>

Trimble and the Kentucky officers left Pittsburgh between June 6 and 9, having split into smaller parties for ease of traveling, but the Pittsburgh POWs were left behind. On June 12 Irish was still waiting for funds, but at least Midshipman Johnston had recovered enough to travel. Trimble had also left another officer, Lieutenant Colonel Evans, behind at Pittsburgh, being ill.<sup>61</sup>

At 1 p.m. on June 25, Mason had finally received enough funds to send all the POWs at Pittsburgh to Erie. But there were still problems. Colonel Brady had finally received an order to furnish regular troops to guard the prisoners, but had already sent all his troops off before the order arrived. Therefore, since the militia had recently received two months' back pay, Irish employed them as the guard for the trip. He had also provided four wagons to haul the crippled prisoners, wives, children, and baggage.<sup>62</sup>

On July 5, the POWs left Pittsburgh for Erie, Pennsylvania, where they were to request the commander of the US schooner *Obio* to cross the lake, land the POWs at Long Point, and take receipts for their delivery. That plan, however, was frustrated as American Major General Jacob Brown had captured Fort Erie in Ontario, the ultimate destination of the prisoners, on July 3.<sup>63</sup>

With the POWs gone from Pittsburgh, Irish's responsibility greatly diminished but did not end. Other prisoners reached or passed through Pittsburgh, including British officers from Kentucky.<sup>64</sup> Some paroled British officers made repeated demands on Irish for additional funds, which Irish was unable to provide, not yet having received more. At least one, Lieutenant Edward Bremner, also passed through Pittsburgh but without Irish's knowledge.<sup>65</sup> A very late captive, Lieutenant Colonel Mahlon Burwell, paroled from Chillicothe in December 1814, also passed through Pittsburgh.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps the last British POW held in Pittsburgh was the glasscutter Michael Myers. Returning POWs was a high priority for the American government, as the British would only return the same number or equivalent of American POWs as they received from their own men. Therefore, often despite the wishes of the British prisoners, they were all sent back to their own side. The sole exception, at least at Pittsburgh and perhaps in the entire United States, was Myers. It turned out that the British authorities had allowed an American soldier to opt to remain in Canada rather than return home, so Mason wrote Irish that he was to make a similar offer to Myers.<sup>67</sup> He did so, and Myers chose to remain in America as a glasscutter, the only British POW of the over 15,000 captured by the United States to be given this option.<sup>68</sup>

When most of the prisoners left Pittsburgh in late June 1814, Irish wrote Mason, asking what he was to do with the barracks that housed them. Was it to be sold or held for future use? Apparently receiving no instructions about the barracks' disposition, and having no further use for it, Irish sold it to avoid having to pay the \$100 a year in rent for the lot on which it stood. He received this amount, which he described as a trifle, since it was not fit for families to inhabit.<sup>69</sup>

By the end of 1814, having what can only be described as an exasperating experience, Irish resigned his position and was succeeded by Joseph McMasters at the Deputy Marshal at Pittsburgh.<sup>70</sup> William B. Irish then became the clerk of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.<sup>71</sup>

#### ABBREVIATIONS FOR ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES CITED

HSWPenn	Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh
LAC	Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa
LC	Library of Congress, Washington, DC
NA	National Archives, Washington, DC
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
NMM	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England
NYHS	New York Historical Society, New York
OHS	Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
SHSW	State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison

## THE BRITISH IN PITTSBURGH

TNA	The National Archives, Kew, England ADM (Admiralty) CO (Colonial Office) FO (Foreign Office) WO (War Office)
UMCL	University of Michigan, Clements Library, Ann Arbor

### NOTES

1. Lt. Charles Larrabee to Lt. Adam Larrabee, Feb. 5, 1812, SHSW-Draper-Mss-Frontier-Wars, series U, roll 56, vol. 9, 1; journal of Sgt. Greenberry Keen, Oct. 2, 1812–April 24, 1813, HSW Penn-MFF1074 Archives Coll.
2. Capt. Oliver Hazard Perry to William Jones, Sept. 10, 1813, NA, RG 45, M-125, roll 31, 33; Capt. Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, Sept. 20, 1813, NYHS–Chauncey Letterbook; Cmdr. Robert Heriot Barclay to Capt. Sir James Lucas Yeo, Sept. 12, 1813, NMM, WAR/71, 112; Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 132–35; Jon Latimer, *1812: War with America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 183.
3. Thomas Steele to John Mason, Oct. 23, 1813, NA, RG 94, entry 127, box 12, folder 1, 103; Hickey, *War of 1812*, 137–39; Latimer, *1812*, 186–91.
4. Capt. Oliver H. Perry to William Jones, Sept. 13, 1813, NA, RG 45, M-125, roll 31, 41.
5. Perry to Jones, Sept. 18, 1813, *ibid.*, 66.
6. Perry to Jones, Sept. 20, 1813, *ibid.*, 73; Cmdr. Robert H. Barclay to John Barclay, Oct. 26, 1813, NA, RG 94, entry 127, box 1, folder 4, 38; Cmdr. Robert H. Barclay to Capt. Sir James L. Yeo, Sept. 12, 1813, NMM, WAR/71, 112.
7. For a general discussion of agreements at this time in history on the treatment and exchange of prisoners of war, see Peter Wilson, “Prisoners in Early Modern European Warfare,” in *Prisoners in War*, ed. Sybille Scheipers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 39–56; Augustus Foster to Viscount Castlereagh, June 20, 1812, TNA FO 5/86, 241; Augustus Foster to James Monroe, June 21, 1812, TNA FO 5/86, 274.
8. Cartel for the Exchange of Prisoners of War, Nov. 28, 1812, NA, RG 59, M-588, roll 6, 19, 25; NMM WAR/78, 235; James Monroe to John Mitchell, March 20, 1813, NA, RG 94, entry 127, box 3, folder 1, 56; NA RG 94, entry 127, box 20, folder 1, 46.
9. Commissioners of the Transport Board to Thomas Barclay, Dec. 1, 1812, TNA ADM 98/292, 1; Thomas Barclay to the Commissioners of the Transport Board, April 18, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Letterbook, Oct. 1813–Sept. 1814, 1; Thomas Barclay to Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, April 14, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Letterbook, April–Sept. 1813, 2.
10. Cartel for the Exchange of POWs, May 12, 1813, TNA ADM 103/465pt1, 235.
11. John Mason to Capt. Oliver H. Perry, Sept. 24, 1813, UMCL-Perry; Mason to Maj. Daniel Parker, Sept. 24, 1813, LC-T-A17. 040. 1, 300; Mason to Perry, Sept. 29, 1813, LC-T-A17. 040. 1, 320.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

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## EXTORTING PHILADELPHIA: COMMODORE BERESFORD AND THE VIXEN PAROLEES

*Ross Hassig*

Philadelphia was an official though little-used prisoner-of-war (POW) exchange station for nine months at the opening of the War of 1812. But notoriously, it was also the locus of the most egregious violation of the sanctity of cartels returning paroled POWs in the entire war. This violation of the bilateral exchange agreement and international law, benefiting the British as it did, was castigated by the Americans but ignored at all levels by the British naval commanders and the British government.

When the US Congress declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812, the United States had no current laws or regulations to deal with POWs. The State Department took responsibility for caring for POWs in the United States, and by late August Secretary of State James Monroe had designated six cities as the only authorized places to dispatch and receive the ships known as cartels conveying POWs—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Charleston—and had established formal rules for their conduct.

When the British ambassador left the United States on the declaration of war, the British chargé d'affaires, Anthony St. John Baker, was left at Washington as the temporary official in charge of POWs in the United States. In that capacity, Baker designated

officials at these cartel cities to act as his agents. Alexander Walker, a British merchant in Philadelphia, had already been superintending the departure of British subjects ("Enemy Aliens") from the United States at Philadelphia. In August 1812 Baker appointed him to be the British agent for POWs there.<sup>1</sup>

On the American side, the US Marshals were responsible for POWs. The office of the marshal for Pennsylvania, John Smith, was at Philadelphia. The British POWs who came into Smith's custody were paroled to towns outside Philadelphia, if they were officers, passengers, or other noncombatants. The rest were confined in local jails.<sup>2</sup>

Philadelphia was designated as one of the American exchange stations in the first exchange agreement between the United States and Great Britain, which was signed at Halifax on November 28, 1812.<sup>3</sup> By this agreement, each side named four exchange cities: Halifax, Quebec, Bridgetown (Barbados), and Kingston (Jamaica) for the British, and Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston for the United States. Among the agreement's provisions, each side was to employ two cartel vessels to transport POWs, who were to be furnished passports from both governments. They would sail as flags of truce, fly the agreed-on flags indicating their cartel status, and not enter the appointed exchange ports except in emergencies.

It was expected that Philadelphia would receive POWs from New York and from every part of the Chesapeake, primarily by inland waterways.<sup>4</sup> But such was not the case. Philadelphia received relatively few POWs compared to the other exchange stations, as the latter were closer to the various British depots.

Although Secretary of State James Monroe was not entirely satisfied with the agreement that Mitchell had negotiated at Halifax in November 1812, the government had nevertheless put most of its terms into effect.<sup>5</sup> On the British side, Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, the commander-in-chief of the British naval forces on the North American and West Indian stations, approved the agreement, as did the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in London, with minor exceptions.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the agreement of November 12 remained in effect in early May 1813 when the *Rebecca Sims*, an American merchant vessel captured by HMS *Southampton* on September 12, 1812, entered the waters of the Delaware as a cartel under a flag of truce.<sup>7</sup>

To avoid the threat of British capture, many American merchant vessels obtained British licenses that allowed them to sail unmolested. The British had granted such licenses to American ships prior to the War of 1812 and continued thereafter. Although these licenses were explicitly outlawed by

the US Congress, shippers adopted many ruses to continue trading with the British, and both Portugal and Spain were nominally neutral countries, so shipments could theoretically continue with them. Most of these vessels sailed from the United States for either the West Indies or the Iberian Peninsula to supply British forces.<sup>8</sup> Legitimate capture meant ultimate forfeiture of the ship and imprisonment of the crew, but this determination was made not by the capturing ship but by each country's courts of admiralty. In the case of the *Rebecca Sims*, this meant adjudicated by the court of Vice Admiralty at Jamaica. Until the case was decided, however, capture meant at least temporary imprisonment of the crew and sequestration of the ship. But since the *Rebecca Sims* had a British license, she was ordered released by the court, and on February 28, 1813, the commander at Jamaica, Vice Admiral Charles Stirling, ordered her crew released.<sup>9</sup>

With the sickly season at Jamaica approaching, and many of the American POWs held there already ill, Admiral Stirling was anxious to send the American POWs back to the United States before disease broke out on the two prison ships at Port Royal.<sup>10</sup> Neither the United States nor Great Britain had put the cartel ships specified in the November 28 agreement into service at this time; customary practice thus far had been for each nation simply to employ various vessels as cartels to convey POWs under flags of truce.

The judicial release of the *Rebecca Sims* and her crew provided an ideal opportunity to engage the freed ship to convey released American prisoners on parole back to the United States. On April 4, 1813, 113 Americans on parole in Jamaica were sent on board the *Rebecca Sims* for exchange in America, and among them were 23 men of the USS *Vixen*.<sup>11</sup> Most of the men sent were sick.<sup>12</sup>

James Turner, acting British agent for POWs at Jamaica, had received a copy of the November 28 exchange agreement, and per its provisions he directed the *Rebecca Sims* to sail to Philadelphia as one of the four American exchange stations.<sup>13</sup> While Admiral Stirling had received Warren's proclamation declaring the Chesapeake and Delaware to be in a state of strict blockade and so informed the commanders of His Majesty's ships on April 1, it is unclear if Turner was informed or whether that order was considered to affect cartels, since they had been established by the exchange agreement of November 28, which Warren had previously ratified.<sup>14</sup>

In any case, the *Rebecca Sims* sailed from Port Royal bound for Philadelphia on April 5 with Turner's authorization.<sup>15</sup> The day after the *Rebecca Sims* sailed, it was stopped and boarded by HMS *Vengeur*, a seventy-four-gun ship, and

then allowed to proceed. The cartel was again boarded on the thirteenth by the American privateer *Sparrow* of Baltimore, which also allowed her to proceed. In an era when even national navies frequently used false flags to deceive the enemy, it was common to stop and inspect all ships, even those clearly flying cartel flags. On the seventeenth, the *Rebecca Sims* put into Havana for provisions and water and resumed its voyage the next day. Then on the evening of May 1, it reached Cape Henlopen at the entrance of the Delaware River and passed within musket shot of HMS *Poictiers*. The British warship fired one of her great guns and a volley of musketry at the cartel, forcing her to come to anchor, and then boarded her.<sup>16</sup>

HMS *Poictiers*, with seventy-four guns, was the flagship of Commodore John Poo Beresford, commanding the British fleet in the Delaware. At this time, the Delaware had been in a state of blockade by Beresford's squadron for weeks.<sup>17</sup> The order for the blockade had not been Warren's idea, but had originated with the Prince Regent and was sent to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on December 26, 1812, by Viscount Castlereagh in the Foreign Office. By that order, a strict and rigorous blockade of the ports and harbors of the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware River was to be implemented. The Admiralty, in turn, sent orders to Admiral Warren to initiate the blockade. When the Admiralty's orders finally reached Warren at Lynnhaven Bay, near Norfolk, Virginia, he publicly proclaimed the blockade on February 6, 1813.<sup>18</sup>

Blockades were intended to stop all unauthorized ships from entering or exiting blockaded ports. But the British did permit some licensed American ships to cross, and cartels or flags of truce acting as cartels should have been admitted. Indeed, by mutual agreement, both countries had already designated Philadelphia as an exchange station, which should have exempted cartels from the blockade.

The cartel situation, however, was in some flux. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had appointed Thomas Barclay as the permanent British agent for POWs in the United States in November 1812 to supersede Baker, who was serving in that capacity temporarily. The Admiralty had also directed Barclay to negotiate a new cartel agreement.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, they were apparently in no hurry for him to do so, and only ordered Barclay to sail from Portsmouth, England, on January 7, 1813.<sup>20</sup> With a stop at Bermuda, it took Barclay nearly three months to reach the United States, arriving at New York on March 31 or April 1, from which he traveled to Washington and was accredited by the United States by mid-April.<sup>21</sup>

Warren then wrote Barclay on April 29 that cartels would be allowed to go to any unblockaded port.<sup>22</sup> Warren's restriction was problematic. Four American ports had been designated as exchange stations by the cartel agreement of November 28, which he had ratified and the Admiralty has approved, and his newly announced blockade would impede one of them: Philadelphia. Obstructing agreed-upon exchange stations was apparently of little concern to the British government, as the Prince Regent ordered a subsequent blockade that would include New York, Charleston, Port Royal, Savannah, and the Mississippi River. Warren ordered this further blockade implemented on May 26, effectively obstructing a second of the four exchange stations.<sup>23</sup>

In any event, on May 2, the day after the *Rebecca Sims* was first sighted by the *Poictiers* in the waters of the Delaware, the cartel ship sent a lieutenant on board the British warship, and on the day after, the *Poictiers* came alongside the cartel. Commodore Beresford then ordered the American parolees brought on board the *Poictiers* and detained. The *Poictiers* sent three boats alongside the *Rebecca Sims* and took out Lieutenant Glen Drayton and twenty-two other members of the crew of the USS *Vixen*.<sup>24</sup>

There was no confusion over the identity or character of the *Rebecca Sims*; the captain's log of the *Poictiers* clearly records her as an American cartel and distinguishes her from mere flags of truce.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Beresford removed paroled American POWs from the cartel authorized at Jamaica to the *Poictiers*, and among them were the twenty-three men of the USS *Vixen*. He then sent a second lieutenant on board the *Rebecca Sims*, who called the muster roll of the crew and demanded to know why they had left Ireland. He then seized three native-born Americans and a Swede and declared them to be either English or Irish, which the *Rebecca Sims*'s captain denied, but three of the men were nevertheless taken to the *Poictiers*, although they were subsequently returned on the third. On the fourth, the *Rebecca Sims* was also boarded by HMS *Acasta*, but was not detained further, and the cartel then sailed out of the Delaware for New York City. Encountering a fierce gale en route, the cartel reached New York on the tenth.<sup>26</sup>

Beresford's focus was on the men of the US brig-of-war *Vixen*. In November 1812 the *Vixen*, Lieutenant George W. Reed commanding, mounting twelve eighteen-pounder carronades and two long nines, and carrying a complement of 130 men, had been cruising for five weeks without capturing any British ships when she encountered HM frigate *Southampton*, commanded by Captain James Lucas Yeo. The *Southampton* mounted twenty-six twelve-pounders and six six-pounders, and had a complement of 210 men; it encountered and

captured the *Vixen*. Unfortunately for both the *Southampton* and the *Vixen*, both ships were wrecked and lost on the reefs off Conception Island in the Bahamas on November 27, with the loss of everything aboard except the men. The *Vixen*'s men were then sent to Jamaica on board the HMS *Rhodian*, where they arrived on December 14. There the men were sent on board the prison ship *Loyalist*.<sup>27</sup> The *Vixen*'s commander, Lieutenant Read, though recorded as having been discharged, was apparently paroled, as he died at Spanish Town, Jamaica, on January 4, 1813.<sup>28</sup>

The political situation regarding POWs was uncertain at the moment Beresford seized the returning paroled Americans from the *Rebecca Sims*. Barclay and American Commissary General for Prisoners of War John Mason were then negotiating an exchange agreement at Washington to supersede the earlier one.<sup>29</sup>

The British Commissioners of the Transport Board, who were directly responsible for POWs under the auspices of the Admiralty, had given Barclay a model exchange agreement to serve as the basis for negotiating a new agreement to replace the earlier one. The model agreement was, however, silent on the location or treatment of exchange stations.<sup>30</sup> And although discussions were ongoing between Barclay and Mason to alter the agreement of November 28, it remained in force in early May when HMS *Poictiers* sighted the *Rebecca Sims* sailing toward Philadelphia and seized her passengers.

On the surface, stopping the *Rebecca Sims* might appear to have been part of the enforcement of the blockade of the Delaware, with which Beresford and his squadron had been charged, however muddled the legal authority in the face of the existing cartel agreement. But his actual reason for detaining the paroled prisoners was not for violating the blockade. Rather, it was to hold them hostage for the return of some of his own crew who were captives in Philadelphia. They would be exchanged, he promised, if his men were returned.<sup>31</sup>

On April 12, three weeks before the arrival of the *Rebecca Sims*, Beresford had sent a captured American vessel, the *Montesquieu*, into Philadelphia to initiate a POW exchange. The *Montesquieu* was a Philadelphia merchant vessel that had been captured by Beresford's squadron on March 27 at the mouth of the Delaware. Returning from Canton, China, it was completely unaware that war had been declared when it was captured by HMS *Paz*.<sup>32</sup> The owner, Stephen Girard of Philadelphia, ransomed the *Montesquieu*, which Beresford then nominally sent to Philadelphia as a cartel with eight American prisoners who had been captured by the British squadron.<sup>33</sup> For their return, Beresford

demanded the immediate exchange of an equal number of British POWs. If the authorities at Philadelphia refused to release the British prisoners, he wrote, the eight Americans were to be returned to the *Poitiers*.<sup>34</sup>

This demand was refused. The following week, having received no returned British POWs from Philadelphia, Beresford wrote to Alexander Walker Jr., the British agent for POWs at Philadelphia, noting the same. His only complaint in that letter, however, was about a new cable he had put on the *Montesquieu* before dispatching it, for which he was responsible.<sup>35</sup> Beresford's complaint about the cable but not about the failure to return the British POWs suggests that he recognized that this was not a simple failed POW exchange.

Beresford had nominally sent the *Montesquieu* to Philadelphia under a flag of truce to exchange prisoners, but its actual purpose was to secure water and provisions for his ship. The vessel, however, was detained by order of the military commander at Philadelphia, Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield, who deemed the cartel's flag of truce to be a ruse. He accordingly notified Secretary of War John Armstrong, the situation was relayed to President Madison, and Bloomfield's actions were approved. Armstrong responded to the general that the *Montesquieu* might be disposed of in the courts and her owners apprehended and tried, presumably suspecting they were collaborating with the enemy. As shipping goods which were then "captured" by the nearby British warships was not unheard of, the *Montesquieu*'s owner paid the British \$180,000 to ransom his ship, an enormous sum at that time.<sup>36</sup>

All the evidence was on the American side. Beresford had in fact sent the *Montesquieu* in as a ruse, which the British agent at Philadelphia also acknowledged.<sup>37</sup> The reason Beresford had undertaken this scheme stretched back weeks earlier. The *Poitiers*'s supplies were running low in mid-March, so on March 16, 1813, Beresford attempted to extort provisions from the town of Lewes, Delaware. He demanded the town send twenty-five live bullocks, vegetables, and hay to the *Poitiers*, for which he pledged to pay Philadelphia prices. But he also threatened to destroy the town if it refused.<sup>38</sup> The governor of Delaware, Joseph Haslet, refused the demand and three weeks later, on April 6, Beresford began shelling Lewes. The bombardment continued for six hours that day and was repeated on the seventh and eighth.<sup>39</sup> But the undefended town nevertheless refused to capitulate, and in the face of this failure the British finally withdrew.<sup>40</sup>

Still in need of provisions and water, Beresford immediately concocted the ploy of sending a ship to Pennsylvania under the pretext of being a cartel to

secure the needed supplies. But when this attempt also failed, Beresford took the opportunity presented by the arrival of the *Rebecca Sims* and violated the cartel agreement and the flag of truce under which she sailed. He seized the paroled Americans and held them aboard his ship as hostages to extort the release of his men held at Philadelphia. The previous POWs offered were seamen taken from merchant ships, and they had failed to achieve his ends. But now Beresford was holding US Navy crewmen.<sup>41</sup> While the men were held on board the *Poictiers*, they were victualled at the two-thirds ration, as was British practice with POWs, although this may reflect the depleted state of the *Poictiers's* provisions.<sup>42</sup>

As Armstrong was informed, Beresford offered to exchange the men of the *Vixen* for the British officers and crew Bloomfield held who had arrived in the *Montesquieu*. Bloomfield regarded this offer as an acknowledgment that the British officers and marines sent in the *Montesquieu* were not protected by their pretended flag. Nevertheless, on the advice of the naval commander at Philadelphia, Captain Alexander Murray, he had negotiated an exchange with Alexander Walker on May 6 under the provisions of the cartel agreement of November 28, 1812. On the seventh, US Navy Lieutenant Drayton sailed from Philadelphia in a pilot boat with a flag of truce and a passport to deliver the sixteen British POWs to Beresford in order to redeem the American prisoners. The next day, two British petty officers and fourteen men who had been held as POWs at Philadelphia were sent on board the *Poictiers*. Beresford then ordered thirty-five Americans taken from the *Rebecca Sims* to board the flag of truce and proceed to Philadelphia.<sup>43</sup>

The Americans had thus been twice released, once on parole from Jamaica, and again now in an unwarranted exchange with Beresford. Although the United States regarded Beresford's seizure of paroled POWs from a cartel vessel as an outrage, administratively the *Vixen's* men were treated as having been exchanged.<sup>44</sup> But even in this extorted exchange, Beresford did not live up to his side of the arrangement.

When Lieutenant Drayton returned from the *Poictiers*, he wrote Secretary of the Navy Jones that he had brought back nineteen men from trading vessels, plus the members of the crew of the *Vixen* being held, but not carpenter John Stevens or seaman Thomas King.<sup>45</sup> In blatant disregard of the agreement negotiated with Walker that had provided for the exchange of all the seized Americans, Beresford refused to release two, Stevens and King, charging that they were British subjects.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, however, Beresford had impressed Americans on board the *Poictiers*, who were involuntarily forced to

serve.<sup>47</sup> In some cases, Beresford seized their birth certificates proving their American birth to remove any claim that they were not British.<sup>48</sup>

Beresford's accusations were just that, and lacked any foundation. As the *Vixen's* purser reported, Stevens joined the *Vixen* in July 1811 and King did so at about the same time. Neither was a British subject nor did either believe he had ever been in the British service. King's protection recorded his birthplace as Brooklyn, New York, and Stevens was a native of South Carolina, as the British subsequently noted in his prison records.<sup>49</sup>

Jones then wrote the naval commander at Norfolk, Captain Charles Stewart, directing him to relate the facts of the seizure of the *Rebecca Sims* to Admiral Warren, Beresford's superior. He was also to inform him that Beresford had detained the POWs on board the *Rebecca Sims*, had furthermore extorted the return of British POWs held at Philadelphia for the return of the paroled American POWs, and finally permanently detained both John Stevens and Thomas King of the *Vixen*, charging them with being British subjects. He was further to inform Warren that, in retaliation, the United States would immediately order the detention of four British subjects who were POWs to be held in duress and to suffer whatever treatment was inflicted on Stevens and King.<sup>50</sup>

Stewart sent the requested letter to Warren on May 20, denouncing Beresford's violation of the rights of parole, expressing the hope that Warren would issue instructions to prevent a repetition of such an incident in the future, and seeking his attention to the situation of Stevens and King who were being detained on board HMS *Poictiers*.<sup>51</sup> Admiral Warren, however, had left Lynnhaven Bay some days earlier, leaving Rear Admiral George Cockburn in command. In Warren's absence, Cockburn opened, read, and responded to Stewart's letter. Stating that no account of Beresford's actions regarding the *Rebecca Sims* and her POWs had reached him or Admiral Warren, he promised an inquiry would be made and a satisfactory explanation given to the US government. But because Stewart had threatened to confine four British subjects in retaliation, Cockburn claimed this was an affront and refused to pursue any further correspondence with him on the matter. He would, however, forward the letter to Admiral Warren without delay.<sup>52</sup>

On May 12, 1813, shortly after most of the *Vixen's* men were returned to Philadelphia, Mason and Barclay signed a new POW exchange agreement. The new exchange stations in North America were to be Halifax (Nova Scotia), Quebec (Canada), Bridgetown (Barbados), and Kingston (Jamaica) for Great Britain. For the United States, they would be Salem

(Massachusetts), Schenectady (New York), Providence (Rhode Island), Wilmington (Delaware), Annapolis (Maryland), Savannah (Georgia), and New Orleans (Louisiana).<sup>53</sup> While the four British locations were the ones officially recognized by the British in North America and the West Indies, a number of others were in operation that were unacknowledged so no US agents would be sent there. For the United States, the POW depots that were actually put into operation were Salem, Providence, and Savannah on the seaboard, and Pittsfield (Massachusetts) and Greenbush (New York inland), although the United States also added other depots as occasion demanded. With Philadelphia having been eliminated as an exchange station, Alexander Walker was removed as the city's British agent.<sup>54</sup> Unlike the British, however, the United States permitted British agents at all but the most temporary depots. The initial list, mutually approved by both Barclay and Mason, included Wilmington, which was agreed to long after Barclay was notified of the blockade of the Delaware by Admiral Warren. Barclay's approval of Wilmington as a POW depot strongly suggests that such locations were exempted from the blockade for purposes of cartel exchanges.

Since Stevens and King were still being held as British subjects on board HMS *Poictiers*, Marshal James Prince at Boston was directed to select four British subjects by lot as hostages for the safety of King and Stevens from among the Royal Navy prisoners in his custody. Two of these men were to be seamen for seaman King, and two carpenters or men of equal rank for carpenter Stevens, to be closely confined and subject to the same treatment as King and Stevens.<sup>55</sup> William Kitts, carpenter, and Henry Reddingfield, boatswain, of the British packet *Swallow*, and seamen John Squirrell and James Russell of HMS *Dragon*, were accordingly designated as the hostages and confined in Concord jail.<sup>56</sup>

On June 10 Mason sent Barclay a copy of Captain Stewart's letter to Warren and Cockburn's reply. Cockburn had misunderstood Stewart's letter, he wrote, and no threat was intended as he clearly stated that the American government had already made the decision to confine four British POWs. Mason then gave Barclay the names of the four men to be confined.<sup>57</sup> Barclay responded that he could not interfere in the actions of His Majesty's officers or the army or navy. The matter was, he wrote, a political one to be dealt with by His Majesty's ministers, and then complained that Mason had not written Warren directly rather than Stewart.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, on July 14, Barclay wrote Warren, informing him of the *Rebecca Sims* incident and enclosing relevant correspondence. And despite his

assertion that he could not interfere in His Majesty's officers' actions, Barclay then proceeded to recommend that the Americans should not be allowed to confine British POWs whenever British subjects (in his words) taken in their service were detained. He then recommended confining double the number of men that the United States confined, and then try, sentence, and execute all British subjects taken in American arms. He further recommended that Warren not release any American prisoners unless he received British subjects in return, man for man. Barclay, by the way, was virulently opposed to the United States: A New York loyalist, he had fled to Canada, his property was confiscated, and he had been attainted for treason by the state in 1779. In 1805 DeWitt Clinton had described him to then-Secretary of State James Madison as "very rancorous against our government."<sup>59</sup>

In early August, Barclay also wrote Captain Talbot at Halifax about the four men held in retaliation for King and Stevens. Ignoring Beresford's seizure of Stevens and King in violation of their authorized release, he wrote that the conduct of the American government in holding these hostages and "in excepting them from the benefit of exchange, and holding them as objects on whom they intend to inflict whatever may be done to the two men late of the *Vixen* is in my opinion incapable of justification." He further recommended that Admiral Warren protest and, if not successful, retaliate.<sup>60</sup>

The Beresford incident must have caused some furor at the Admiralty, as the Lords Commissioners ordered Beresford to send his log to their office, which he did on July 31.<sup>61</sup> That log, however, contains only the fact that the *Rebecca Sims* arrived in the Delaware on May 1, a lieutenant from the cartel came on board the *Poictiers* on the second, and then on the eighth some American POWs were exchanged. The seizure and the forced exchange are entirely ignored, and whatever interest the Admiralty had in the events in question, they apparently did not pursue the matter further.

And while Mason tried to pursue the case with Barclay, the British agent refused, arguing that the matter involved citizenship and nationality and would therefore have to be dealt with by the two governments.<sup>62</sup> While thus claiming to be above the fray, Barclay was actively recommending various courses of action to Warren and others, but never admitting as much in his correspondence to the Americans.

Shortly after King and Stevens were taken from the cartel in the Delaware, HMS *Poictiers* sailed to Bermuda where the two men were confined in the *Ruby* guard ship as British subjects.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, neither was listed in the American POW records at Bermuda. King said many attempts were made to

induce them to declare themselves British subjects, but both men uniformly rejected these.<sup>64</sup>

King was held on board the *Ruby*, a sixty-four-gun ship, which was temporarily serving as a prison ship, from May 10 to July 25 and, by his own account, was poorly treated. While on the *Ruby*, King sold some of his clothing and used the money to purchase a pocket compass from one of his mess-mates. He then watched for an opportunity to escape.

The *Ruby* kept a seven-ton yawl alongside, seven feet in breadth and twenty-two feet in length, which the ship's officers frequently took out sailing. They were supposed to secure the boat and remove the gear on their return, but on July 25, having returned at dusk, the officers neglected to secure it, and left her masts, sails, rudder, and other equipment all standing. King told his companions that he intended to escape and invited them to accompany him. Thinking him mad to risk crossing the ocean in that small boat without supplies, they all refused. So alone, at 12:30 a.m. on July 26, while the guard was changing and vigilance was lax, King crawled out of a lower deck porthole onto the larboard (port) boom, and lowered himself into the yawl. Casting off, he drifted on the tide until he was fifty yards from the ship when he heard the bell strike 1 and the sentinel cry, "All's well." Knowing he had not been seen, he hoisted the sail and, obscured by a squall, sailed away, steering due north until daylight.

The yawl contained eleven small casks of water, which had served as ballast, so King had water but little food. He brought two one-pound loaves of bread with him but uncertain how long he would be at sea, to stretch his food, King limited himself to just one-eighth of a loaf (two ounces) per day, and less when he could manage. At daylight, King steered west-northwest, until the third day when a brig hove into sight. Quickly standing north again, he wetted his sails to catch the breeze and lost the brig, which proved to be the only ship he saw during his voyage, and then returned to his original course. He lashed his arm to the tiller at night so if the boat veered off course, he would be awakened by the jerk of the rudder. He occasionally had to bail water out of the boat, which he did with one of the casks.

At 4 p.m. on the ninth day, King spotted the lighthouse at Cape Henry, Virginia, and made toward it. But once inside the cape, he again saw sails and, presuming them to be British, he headed southward, landing ten miles south of Cape Henry on August 3. He then furled his sail and slept until sunrise. On waking, he walked to the nearest house, which belonged to a Mr. Whitehouse, who accompanied him to Norfolk. There he reported to

Captain John Cassin, who gave King money to compensate Whitehouse. King sold his boat for \$30 and then proceeded to Washington, DC. His escape was widely reported in American newspapers and King was given the rank of master's mate and reentered the US Navy.<sup>65</sup>

When Mason learned of King's escape, he ordered the two British POWs who were held as hostages for his safety, John Squirrell and James Russell, returned to the ordinary state of POWs. Although King's return owed nothing to British actions, Mason released the two men to avoid any pretext for complaint and so informed Barclay.<sup>66</sup> Mason's goodwill gesture, however, was largely wasted. When Barclay responded, he acknowledged the release of Squirrell and Russell and said the four American POWs held in counter-retaliation would be released when the former arrived at Halifax. But the main thrust of his letter was that the British government was retaliating for the treatment of British prisoners in the United States and repeatedly noted that Great Britain held more POWs than America, implying that British practices should not be challenged on threat of even more lopsided retaliation.<sup>67</sup>

The British had, indeed, retaliated twofold for the American retaliation for King's and Stevens's detention. Only on October 8, a month and a half after Mason wrote him that two of the British hostages had been returned to the status of ordinary prisoners, Barclay wrote Admiral Griffith commanding at Halifax to release Joseph Goodall, John Chappel, James Peterson, and Isaac Porter, then held in Halifax gaol as hostages for Squirrell and Russell.<sup>68</sup>

Although both British naval commanders and politicians in North America continued to argue the legitimacy of seizing Stevens and King, the British government never made that claim. Nevertheless, Stevens remained a prisoner at Bermuda until he was sent to England. Once again, as a "British subject," his arrival was not recorded in American POW records. He only appeared as an American in British POW records in 1814 when he was sent from Plymouth to Dartmoor prison on July 2. In the Dartmoor records, Stevens was described as twenty-seven years of age, five feet, eight and a half inches tall, stout, with a round face, dark complexion, black hair, hazel eyes, with large whiskers, and, most important, as an American born in South Carolina.<sup>69</sup>

No account of Stevens's capture, parole, or seizure had apparently reached the Transport Board or, if so, it had been ignored. The lapse also suggests that the American agent for POWs in London, Reuben G. Beasley, had also not raised the issue with the board, so either he did not receive Mason's account

of January 6, 1814, or he made no inquiry, having never been informed that Stevens had been sent to England.<sup>70</sup> But more tellingly, Barclay, who was fully aware of the incident, did not inform the board either.

After reaching Dartmoor, Stevens wrote the Transport Board that he had been exchanged at Jamaica in April 1813 and sought his release on that basis. The board ordered their agent at Plymouth, Lieutenant Richard Cheesman, to inquire into his claim, as they were skeptical that they could have remained ignorant of the facts so long. By Stevens's account, he had now been paroled for almost seventeen months, but reimprisoned for sixteen of them. Since all the POW records and exchanges were held by the Transport Board, the inquiry quickly confirmed Stevens's claim and the board finally ordered his release. Sent from Dartmoor to Dartmouth on October 19, 1814, Stevens joined sixty-six other American POWs on board the cartel *Jenny* the next day to return to the United States, apparently under a new parole. He finally reached New York on December 2, 1814, twenty-one months after his initial exchange.<sup>71</sup>

The two British POWs held for Stevens's safety, William Kitts and Henry Reddingfield, remained as hostages at Concord until the end of the war. They were then released on March 31, 1815, and embarked on the American cartel *Hope*.<sup>72</sup>

Occasional violations of cartel ships occurred throughout the war, as did violations of flags of truce by both sides and British violations of neutral ports, notably in the attacks on the USS *Essex* at Valparaiso and on the *General Armstrong* at Fayal. But Beresford's violation of a cartel with paroled POWs was unprecedented in the war. Prisoner-of-war exchanges continued, but this and other such incidents caused considerable difficulties, and the number and quantities of the exchanges diminished. Nevertheless, as long as violations such as Beresford's were successful, they brought no condemnation from British authorities.

Philadelphia was officially a POW exchange station from August 1812 until May 12, 1813. But during that time, none of the British prison depots sent cartels to Philadelphia except for the *Rebecca Sims*, as other American stations were more conveniently located in relation to them. Philadelphia had, however, received POWs from privateers and ships they brought into that port, both before this new agreement and afterwards. Even British warships thereafter occasionally sent prisoners into Philadelphia for exchange.<sup>73</sup>

## EXTORTING PHILADELPHIA

Officially, the cartel of May 12, 1813, ended Philadelphia's role as a POW exchange station. But if any other cartel vessels brought released American prisoners to Philadelphia, they went unmentioned in depot records. British POWs were held for varying periods at both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and British officers were paroled to a number of Pennsylvania towns. Philadelphia experienced no further incident as outrageous as the one involving the *Rebecca Sims*. But the effect of its seizure on Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians generally is difficult to assess, though for the rest of the war Pennsylvania remained a staunch supporter of the Madison administration and its war efforts.<sup>74</sup>

### ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR ARCHIVES CITED

HS-Penn	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
IULL	Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington
LC	Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, DC
NA	National Archives, Washington, DC
NMM	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England
NYHS	New-York Historical Society, New York, NY
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, England.
ADM	Admiralty
CO	Colonial Office
FO	Foreign Office

### NOTES

I would like to acknowledge the support of a Helms Fellowship in 2004 at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, and the Huntington Library/British Academy for a 2001 fellowship, both of which significantly aided the research on this project. James Monroe to Anthony St. John Baker, August 26, 1812, TNA FO 5/88, 57.

1. Anthony St. John Baker to James Monroe, Aug. 28, 1812, TNA FO 5/87, 244; St. John Baker to Monroe, Aug. 29, 1812, TNA FO 5/87, 243.
2. John Smith to James Monroe, Aug. 28, 1812, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 16, folder 2, 202.
3. Cartel for the Exchange of Prisoners of War, Nov. 28, 1812, TNA FO 5/88, 312.
4. John Mitchell to James Monroe, Nov. 20, 1812, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 13, folder 4, 50.

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5. James Monroe to John Mitchell, March 20, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 3, folder 1, 56; Monroe to the Marshals, March 20, 1813, LC-Mitchell-2, 231.
6. John Barrow to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, March 9, 1813, TNA ADM 2/932, 242.
7. General Entry Book of American Prisoners of War at Jamaica, TNA ADM 103/190.
8. Michael J. Crawford, "The Navy's Campaign against the Licensed Trade in the War of 1812," *American Neptune* 46 (1986): 165–72.
9. Journal of Admiral Charles Stirling, Feb. 28, 1813, TNA ADM 50/95 (hereafter Stirling journal); Stirling, Feb. 28, 1813, NMM MSS/80/171.0; [Mason], June 1813, NA RG 45, box 607; Charles Calvert Egerton, *The Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner, on Board the British Prison Ship Loyalist, in Jamaica, from November 1, 1812 to April 5, 1813* (Baltimore, 1813), 43.
10. Stirling to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, March 21, 1813, NMM WAR/69, 110.
11. American POWs discharged by Stirling, April 4, 1813, NMM WAR/79, 382.
12. James Turner to Lt. William Miller, May 22, 1813, NMM WAR/79, 443.
13. Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 7.
14. Stirling journal, April 1, 1813.
15. James Turner to Thomas Barclay, May 8, 1813, NYHS–Barclay-Papers, box 6.
16. Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 64.
17. Committee Report, April 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 5 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1911–16), 4:391–92.
18. Viscount Castlereagh to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, Dec. 26, 1812, TNA FO 95/367, 20; Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, Dec. 26, 1812, TNA ADM 2/1375, 337; Admiral Sir John B. Warren's Proclamation, Feb. 6, 1813, TNA ADM 1/503, 107.
19. Reuben G. Beasley to James Monroe, Nov. 5, 1812, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 2, folder 2.
20. Alexander McLeay to Thomas Barclay, Jan. 5, 1813, TNA ADM 98/292, 20.
21. Peter Curtenius to James Monroe, March 31, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 12, folder 3, 8; Thomas Barclay to the Commissioners of the Transport Board, April 18, 1813 NYHS–Barclay Letterbook, Oct. 1813–Sept. 1814, 1; Thomas Barclay to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, April 14, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Letterbook, April–Sept. 1813, 2.
22. Admiral Sir John B. Warren to Thomas Barclay, March 29, 1813, NMM WAR/43.
23. *British and Foreign State Papers: 1812–1814* (London, 1812–14), March 30, 1813, 1367.
24. Captain's log, HMS *Poictiers*, May 1–3, 1813, TNA ADM 51/2694; John Mason to Reuben G. Beasley, Jan. 6, 1814, NA RG 45, series 464, box 606; Thomas King's narrative, Nov. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*; Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 65.
25. Captain's log, HMS *Poictiers*, May 1–3, 1813.
26. Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 65–66; *Baltimore Patriot*, May 11, 1813.
27. Alexander Jamaica to James Monroe, Feb. 12, 1813, NA RG 45, series 464, box 614; *Rhodian, Rolla*, and *Caledonia*, Dec. 13–14, 1812, NMM MSS/80/171.0; Stirling to John W. Croker, Dec. 16, 1812, TNA ADM 1/264; Muster Roll, HMS *Rhodian*, Jan. 1813, TNA ADM 37/3858; Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 13.
28. General Entry Book of American Prisoners of War at Jamaica, TNA ADM 103/190, no. 440; Egerton, *Journal of an Unfortunate Prisoner*, 20; William Jones to John Mason, April 27, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 13, folder 3, 12.

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29. Thomas Barclay to John Mason, April 12, 1813, TNA CO 42/154, 149.
30. Project of a proposed Cartel, n.d., TNA ADM 98/292, 13–18.
31. John Mason to Reuben G. Beasley, Jan. 6, 1814, NA RG 45, series 464, box 606; Thomas King's narrative, Nov. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*.
32. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, April 1, 1813.
33. *The Columbian*, April 10, 1813.
34. Capt. John Poo Beresford to the Officer commanding the cartel, April 8, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Papers, box 11; Receipt of eight American POWs from HMS *Poictiers*, April 13, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Papers, box 11.
35. Capt. John P. Beresford to Alexander Walker Jr., April 22, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Papers, box 11.
36. John Armstrong to Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield, May 4, 1813, NA RG 45, box 587.
37. Alexander Walker Jr. to Thomas Barclay, May 8, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Papers, box 6; affidavit of William Prior, April 27, 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:400–401.
38. Capt. John P. Beresford's demands to Delaware, March 16, 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:370; *New-England Palladium*, March 26, 1813.
39. Joseph Haslet to Capt. John P. Beresford, March 26, 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:374; Captain's log, HMS *Poictiers*, April 6–7, 1813, TNA ADM 51/2694; *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:392.
40. Committee Report, April 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:391–92.
41. E.g., Affidavit of William Prior, April 25, 1813, *Public Archives Commission of Delaware*, 4:400–401; April 1813 Joseph Haslet to Samuel B. Davis, April 30, 1813, IULL–War of 1812.
42. Muster Book, HMS *Poictiers*, May 1–June 30, 1813, TNA ADM 37/3807
43. Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield to John Armstrong, May 7, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 10, folder 5, 64; List of 19 American POWs exchanged, May 8, 1813, NA RG 45, box 571.
44. William Jones to John Mason, May 11, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 13, folder 3, 6; John Mason to the secretary of the navy, May 11, 1813, LC-T-A17.040.1, 38.
45. Lt. Glen Drayton to William Jones, May 11, 1813, NA M 125, roll 28; Drayton to Edwin S. Satterwhite, May 11, 1813, NA RG 45, box 571.
46. Capt. John P. Beresford to Lt. Glen Drayton, May 8, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 10, folder 1; Captain's log, HMS *Poictiers*, May 1–3, 1813, TNA ADM 51/2694; John Mason to Reuben G. Beasley, Jan. 6, 1814, NA RG 45, series 464, box 606; Thomas King's narrative, Nov. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*.
47. E.g., David Underhand to his father, April 6, 1813, NMM WAR/79, 562.
48. E.g., Thomas Lynch to John Mitchell, April 6, 1813, HS–Penn, Mitchell.
49. Edwin F. Satterwhite to John Mason, May 17, 1813, NA RG 45, box 571; American Prisoners of War at Dartmoor, TNA ADM 103/88, no. 1688.
50. William Jones to Capt. Charles Stewart, May 17, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 11, folder 2.
51. Capt. Charles Stewart to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, May 20, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 10, folder 1.
52. Rear Admiral George Cockburn to Capt. Charles Stewart, May 21, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 10, folder 1.
53. Cartel for the exchange of POWs, May 12, 1813, TNA ADM 103/465 pt. 1, 201–10.
54. John Mason to John Smith, May 15, 1813, LC-T-A17.040.1, 48.

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55. John Mason to James Prince, May 28, 1813, LC-T-A17.040.1, 73.
56. John Mason to William Jones, June 10, 1813, LC-T-A17.040.1, 92; Return of POWs, Sept. 1, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 21A, folder 1.
57. John Mason to Thomas Barclay, June 10, 1813, NMM WAR/79, 513.
58. Thomas Barclay to John Mason, June 15, 1813, NMM WAR/79, 532.
59. Thomas Barclay to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, July 14, 1813, TNA ADM 1/3765, 231. For information on Barclay see DeWitt Clinton to James Madison, May 1, 1805, *Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, vol. 9, ed. Mary A. Hackett et al. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 303–4.
60. Thomas Barclay to Capt. John Talbot, Aug. 2, 1813, TNA ADM 1/3765, 249.
61. Capt. John P. Beresford to John W. Croker, July 31, 1813, TNA ADM 1/1555.
62. Thomas Barclay to John Mason, Aug. 29, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 6, folder 5, 218.
63. Aug. 21, 1813, *Essex Register*.
64. Thomas King's narrative, Nov. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*.
65. Aug. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*, Aug. 21, 1813; Thomas King's narrative, Nov. 6, 1813, *Essex Register*.
66. John Mason to James Prince, Aug. 24, 1813, LC-T-A17.040.1, 272; John Mason to Thomas Barclay, Aug. 25, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 17, 1:67.
67. Thomas Barclay to John Mason, Sept. 17, 1813, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 6, folder 5, 232.
68. Thomas Barclay to Vice Admiral Herbert Griffith, Oct. 8, 1813, NYHS–Barclay Letterbook, Oct. 1813–Aug. 1814, 5.
69. General Entry Book of American Prisoners of War at Dartmoor, TNA ADM 103/88, no. 1688.
70. John Mason to Reuben G. Beasley, Jan. 6, 1814, NA RG 45, series 464, box 606.
71. Reuben G. Beasley, Oct. 20, 1814, NA RG 45, box 566.
72. British POWs held by the United States, NA RG 45, entry 615, vols. 1–2.
73. Charles Adams et al. to John Smith, Jan. 1, 1815, NA RG 94, entry 127, box 10, folder 3, 2.
74. E.g., Simon Snyder, "The Administration of Simon Snyder, 1808–1817," *Pennsylvania Archives* (1900, 4th ser.) 4:834–35; March 5, 1814, *Essex Register*.

## OBITUARY

### ON THE PASSING OF GOVERNOR GEORGE M. LEADER, 1918–2013

Pennsylvania lost a leader on Thursday, May 9, 2013. Yes, a leader and a Leader. As his biographer I'd like to convey to the readers of *Pennsylvania History* several highly relevant points about this man's remarkable life.

First, he ranks among Pennsylvania's very few reform-minded governors and he is firmly placed in a league with reformer Gifford Pinchot who served twice as governor (1923–27 and 1931–35). Leader served as governor from 1955 to 1959 and was elected at the remarkably young age of thirty-six (second only to the late-nineteenth century's Robert Pattison who was thirty-five). He was a progressive Democrat, so rarely seen in today's political environment. He wasn't shy about labeling himself a liberal and his compassion for the poor, the disabled, and the forgotten was remarkable. He appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine the week after his November 1954 upset of Governor John Fine's lieutenant governor, Lloyd Wood. *Time* credited Leader with leading a solid, honest campaign that garnered the agrarian and labor vote and noted that by winning he had upset "that bulwark of Republicanism: Pennsylvania." (Leader also served in



Governor Leader with Pennsylvania's Miss Cherry Pie. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives.

the Pennsylvania State Senate in the late 1940s and early 1950s, was a World War II Navy veteran, and, with his wife Mary Jane, started a York County chicken farm using a GI Bill loan after the war.)

George Leader once commented to me that he “didn’t want to put state government on cruise control” when he was elected governor. He used the accelerator instead. To name just a few of his achievements: he expanded Pennsylvania’s state park system as a model for the nation; created the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority as a partnership between state government and private industry to create jobs; mandated that school districts provide education to children with special needs; and signed a law granting women equal property rights in instances of divorce or death of a spouse. He also created a Fair Employment Practices Commission to police employment discrimination in an era when the national civil rights movement was gaining steam and he signed Pennsylvania’s first antilittering and strip-mine reclamation laws, considered by some to be major steps toward protecting the environment.

Later in life he was an entrepreneur and established nursing, long-term care, and retirement facilities for seniors. The multiple campuses of Country Meadows and Providence Place retirement communities throughout

Pennsylvania stand as a proud part of his legacy and have been widely recognized for their excellence.

Second, Governor Leader was a true humanitarian. Among other contributions, he established a prison ministry program, a computer literacy initiative program for inner-city school children, and a major mission program in Ghana. He was deeply devoted to causes that targeted the marginalized. He often told me that he and his family had been granted much in life and that it was his moral obligation to give back as much as he could. He was the most generous person I've ever known.

Third, this was a man who, well into his nineties, could intelligently converse on many subjects. He and I spent countless hours together at his office, traveling in his car, or at his favorite lunch spot—Bob Evans in Hershey—engaged in wide ranging and in-depth conversation on domestic and foreign political affairs, Pennsylvania politics, religion and spirituality, the state of the economy, the latest article he read on a major medical breakthrough, how the Phillies were doing, and many, many other topics. Governor Leader was also deeply troubled by the corruption that plagued the Pennsylvania General Assembly in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This was a frequent topic of our discussions. He never could quite understand how it is that people in places of public responsibility would abuse that trust for personal gain. To him that type of behavior was abhorrent.

Fourth, he was a poet and produced two books of poetry in his eighties and nineties. His poetry was an outlet for him to express his innermost thoughts on many subjects, especially those that might be controversial or sensitive. For example, his poems show empathy for immigrants to the United States—legal or not—and preached understanding for those who lead alternative lifestyles. His poems discussed a caring for the disabled, children who grow up in poverty, and those housed in correctional and mental health facilities. And his poetry frequently reflected his deep spiritual views and tolerance for all beliefs.

When Governor Leader asked me to write his biography in 2008, I didn't have to think twice about it. I had known him for twenty-five years and knew that he had a remarkable story to share. We sat for over twenty hours of oral history interviews that comprise the bulk of his biography—the only oral history-based biography of any Pennsylvania governor. At my insistence he agreed to subtitle his biography *Challenging Complacency*. Indeed, his entire life was about challenging the status quo. It was part of his intellectual composition. Historians are supposed to be objective. I'm the first to fess up that, in this case, I didn't abide by that rule too much. We understood each

other too well, shared many of the same beliefs, and had developed a close friendship that was generationally transcendent.

I last lunched with him three weeks before he passed. Despite his being as mentally sharp as ever, I could tell that he wasn't doing well physically. As we parted I sensed that it might be the last time we would see each other. We shook hands and I thanked him for all he had done for so many, including me. But he insisted that no thanks were necessary. I have to admit getting a bit choked up as I turned to walk away.

During the overnight hours the following week I suddenly awoke shaken and in the proverbial "cold sweat." My wife, Cherie, awoke as I sat on the edge of the bed in the darkness. She asked what was the matter? I told her that in my dream I had just attended Governor Leader's funeral. She told me to call him the next day to see how he was. I never did. I regret that.

Yes, Pennsylvania has lost a leader, his dear family has lost its patriarch, I have lost one of my best friends. Yet, rest assured that if, indeed, there is a hereafter (and he never doubted it for a moment) Governor George M. Leader is there reforming the status quo and telling those in charge how things can be done better. He's also sharing his poetry and living out his mantra—engraved on his tombstone in a cemetery at a Jacobus, York County, church—"The Essence of Life is Non-Judgmental, Unconditional Love." He was interred in the shadow of that tombstone on May 16, 2013, joining his wife, Mary Jane, and son Fred. Governor Leader is survived by his sons G. Michael and David and daughter Jane as well as numerous grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

KENNETH C. WOLENSKY  
*Pennsylvania Historical Association*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*W*endy A. Cooper and Lisa Minardi. *Paint, Pattern and People: Furniture of Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1725–1850* (Philadelphia: Winterthur and the University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Pp. xxv, 277. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55.00.

The 2011 exhibit *Paint, Pattern and People* at Winterthur Museum was remarkable in that it showcased not only collections from multiple museums but also numerous objects held privately. Those attending saw artifacts that they could not have seen before, no matter how many museums they had visited or antique shows they had attended. The exhibit catalog that accompanied the exhibit shares this quality. While the decorative arts of early Pennsylvania have been the subject of many publications, the reader of this volume is bound to encounter old favorites as well as examples that have been newly discovered, or at least newly publicized.

The book *Paint, Pattern and People: Furniture of Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1725–1850* aims to bring a new level of attention

to the furniture produced in Philadelphia's hinterlands through the careful study of a select group of objects. Cooper and Minardi, who authored the book and curated the exhibit, write that "the principal goal of the project was to identify distinct localisms based on well-documented examples in which the maker or family history is known" (xxiv). The emphasis on well-documented examples is noteworthy. While many objects that reside in museum and private collections have limited provenance, those included in this study are generally signed or accompanied by written records, such as receipts, or strong family histories that indicate who made them, who owned them, or both.

Despite the volume's focus on furniture, Cooper and Minardi do not limit themselves to the study of that medium. Their body of evidence includes other items made from wood, such as architectural features that could have been made by the same woodworkers who crafted seating and storage forms. Recognizing that craftsmen served the needs of families throughout the life cycle, they even include a discussion of coffins, biers for carrying coffins, and corpse trays. References to funeral practices suggest one of the strengths of *Paint, Pattern and People*: it makes connections among different types of material culture, discussing coffee drinking in the context of coffee mills, music in the context of chairs designed to accommodate trombone players, and textiles such as featherbeds in the context of bedsteads with pillow panels.

If the identification of exceptionally documented objects in a variety of materials (and their lavish illustration in color, no less) is this volume's greatest strength, the major weakness of *Paint, Pattern and People* is the lack of a consistent argument. The content of the book is divided into an introduction and four chapters: "People," "Places," "Families," and "Makers." The first two chapters use material culture as a way to engage in a broad discussion of difference in colonial and early national Pennsylvania. The authors use physical differences among artifacts as a key to understanding differences based on ethnic and religious background and geographic location. In the latter two chapters, the focus shifts to a greater emphasis on individuals, with abundant detail, much of it genealogical, about those who created and owned the objects under study. Unfortunately, there is no formal conclusion to concretely tie the various parts together.

The authors do make the case in the introduction that "localism, more so than regionalism, may be a more relevant organizing concept for the study of American history and material culture" (xvii). Similar arguments have been offered, specifically concerning the mid-Atlantic region, by Gabrielle Lanier in *The Delaware Valley in the Early Republic* (2005) and Liam Riordan in *Many*

*Identities, One Nation* (2007), both of which are cited in the extensive bibliography. In many respects, *Paint, Pattern and People* builds on the work of these two and other authors. By examining local construction features and decorative patterns, many known to collectors for years, the authors raise questions about both patronage and training networks. When they demonstrate the striking similarity between furniture made in Pennsylvania and Virginia, issues of migration and mobility also come to the fore.

Yet the authors' primary intended audience members are not really historians, nor are the topics they address always those that historians would find the most interesting. For example, when they discuss a spinning wheel and reel made in 1842 for Rebecca H. Hershey, they emphasize how they know that Daniel Danner was the maker rather than why tools for home spinning were still being produced after the rise of textile mills. They do not explore whether the lack of wear on the objects suggests that they were made for commemorative reasons, in an era when the colonial past was increasingly revered, rather than for purely productive purposes.

Cooper and Minardi include as one of their objectives "debunking and correcting some long standing myths," and their new findings often have the most bearing among students of the decorative arts (xxvii). The authors expertly note that painted chests, often called "dower" chests, were made for both men and women and therefore should not automatically be associated with a woman's dowry. They go on to challenge John Joseph Stoudt's assertion that the decorative motifs on these chests carried religious meaning—that birds, for instance, symbolized the soul. Through their extensive research, Cooper and Minardi can offer alternative explanations for certain motifs, but they cannot rule out religious meaning. Despite the lack of conclusive evidence in cases like this, the authors should be commended for questioning traditional but often romanticized ideas about early Pennsylvania furniture and introducing a scholarly perspective to the discourse.

A desire to address previous (mis)conceptions about Pennsylvania decorative arts, coupled with the reality of what has survived and can be documented, creates somewhat uneven coverage of distinct groups and individuals. For example, in the section on Pennsylvania Germans, the authors devote eleven pages to the Moravians and only six to the much more numerous members of German Lutheran and Reformed congregations. Neither Jews nor Catholics are discussed in any detail, and Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans are missing from the account.

*Paint, Pattern and People* is a book that will be most appreciated by those with a passion for the decorative arts. The authors have done exemplary

research identifying well-documented objects and using those to make attributions to makers and to make comparisons with other objects. The volume is well designed and illustrated to capture the essence of the exhibit where these objects, some previously unexhibited, could be seen together. Cooper and Minardi state that the book “is not about dovetails and glue blocks” but rather “the furniture and what it can tell us about the people who made and owned it as well as the culture and craft production of the areas in which it originated” (xxiv). This goal is achieved in a catalog that is full of personal names, places, and dates. However, in their attention to these details, the authors sometimes miss the opportunity to explore larger historical issues. Their call to future scholars to build on their study recognizes that there is still more to be said about Pennsylvania furniture.

CYNTHIA G. FALK

*Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta*

Evan Haefeli. *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). Pp. 384. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$45.00.

The title of Evan Haefeli’s book leads the reader to expect a discussion of the standard view of how the Dutch from the melting pot that was seventeenth-century Amsterdam brought religious tolerance to New Netherland and thus to the Middle Colonies and ultimately to the United States. But this is not the case Haefeli makes. The subject is much more nuanced.

Although religious toleration was a legal right in the Dutch Republic enshrined in article 13 of the 1579 Union of Utrecht, which ordained that “everyone shall remain free in religion and that no one may be persecuted or investigated because of religion,” toleration was not tolerance. American religious liberty, Haefeli writes, had its origins not in sixteenth-century Dutch political thinking but in Stuart England. When James, duke of York and a Roman Catholic, was given New Netherland by his Roman Catholic-leaning brother Charles II in 1664, one of his first acts was to allow the discriminated-against Lutherans to call a minister—something the Dutch had not allowed during their forty-year tenure (except in New Sweden on the Delaware), just as they had not allowed public worship by Jews, Catholics, Quakers, or other dissenting Protestants. In New Netherland, the Reformed

Dutch Church was the official church and the only one permitted to conduct public worship. Freedom of the conscience was the freedom to worship privately, not the freedom to worship in groups in public.

Taking a social-historical approach to his topic, Haefeli draws on both Atlantic history, which holds that the American colonies were part of a trans-Atlantic world in which events in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean affected people, trade, and ideas interactively, and borderlands history, which stresses the fluidity and permeability of boundaries—not only geographical but among and between Europeans, Americans, Indians, and Africans—in early American history. Into this multicultural context enter the Stuarts, restored to their authority after two decades of trauma and civil war. Beset with the need to maintain their Restoration, and mindful of their own proclivities for Roman Catholicism, one part of Charles II's strategy was to extend tolerance to all comers. Haefeli does not spell this out clearly enough. He provides "readers unfamiliar with Dutch history . . . useful orientation" to the events and religious groups relevant to the Dutch-American story, but he is not equally helpful to readers hazy on Stuart history. So, reader, beware. Brush up on your Stuart history before proceeding.

This aside, the author makes, and convincingly, many salient points not heretofore part of the dialogue about the influence of the Reformed Dutch Church in New Netherland. He indicates, for instance, in chapter 1 that radical philosophical developments of the 1650s and 1660s in Amsterdam made it a very different city from the one the original settlers had known in the 1620s and 1630s. In the 1650s, the establishment of Amsterdam City's own colony on the Delaware, New Amstel, introduced there a "unique and special time in Dutch history, and in the history of America," for New Amstel's authorities allowed some of those radical experiments in religious liberty to establish a first footing on American soil (53).

Haefeli's treatment of connivance, the Dutch practice of winking at religious dissent (such as hidden house churches and synagogues), is thoughtful and nuanced. He points out that foreigners interpreted the religious diversity in the side streets and attics of Amsterdam as religious freedom, when it was not. Connivance developed, he writes, to "smooth over some of the rough edges created by the clash between the pretensions to hegemony of the Dutch Reformed Church and the reality of its incomplete hold on the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the Dutch world, but it varied widely depending on the authorities in charge and how closely they supervised" (56). Not all clandestine religious activity was winked at. Some was discouraged, even in

tolerant Amsterdam. In New Netherland, with the exception of the Delaware communities, it was routinely suppressed.

Everywhere in the Dutch world, by the seventeenth century a global world, it was the same. Religious diversity was not forbidden, but religions not of the Calvinist persuasion were expected to acknowledge the primacy of the Dutch Reformed Church and keep their worship out of sight. This was truer in New Netherland than in certain Dutch trading communities in northern Europe, New Sweden on the Delaware, and especially Brazil, where the Dutch authorities extended a formal grant of toleration to Catholics and Jews.

Because of these ambiguous situations, the Dutch could think of themselves as tolerant, as they did not actively engage in religious persecution. But the tolerated could claim the Dutch were intolerant because they did not permit public worship beyond their own church. As the author points out, this contradiction allowed the Reformed Church to live surrounded by religious diversity without endorsing it, just as it permitted all to live with the Dutch without accepting the Dutch Reformed Church.

As the Dutch expanded their trade and their colonies around the globe, they encountered more exotic faiths—Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian—and although they were constrained by the Union of Utrecht from compelling these diverse people to conform to Dutch Reformed beliefs, the hope was always that by merely suppressing the competition, rather than requiring conformity, dissenters would be drawn to the Reformed Church, thus growing it from within and spreading its influence benignly wherever Dutch trade routes took it.

This well-argued book will compel all who write of the Reformed Dutch Church in the future to shun reflexive claims for Dutch tolerance. It was more complicated than has been thought. The author concludes with the idea that the greatest contribution of the Dutch to American religious diversity was not to promote tolerance, but to hold the mid-Atlantic out of English hands until the Restoration, giving pluralism a chance to root itself deeply and permanently in what became New York and New Jersey and parts of Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

FIRTH HARING FABEND  
*Montclair State University*

Simon Finger, *The Contagious City: The Politics of Public Health in Early Philadelphia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). Pp. 256. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95.

Simon Finger's *The Contagious City: The Politics of Public Health in Early Philadelphia* traces the connections between politics and public health in Philadelphia from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The author does a fine job showing how political ideology corresponded with health and medical reform. Finger writes, "I . . . show how political efforts to promote health on a collective basis . . . shaped the political culture of that city and of the province and the nation around it" (5). He continues, "Ideas about people, politics, and space influenced the way colonists, rebels, and republicans conceived their polity" (6). As Philadelphia underwent colonial development, experienced revolutionary transformation, and exerted national influence, political leaders, medical professionals, city planners, and public health reformers did their best to positively influence the health of the city's residents as well as the urban body politic.

Finger begins his study in the colonial period. He describes how William Penn promoted the physical transformation of the Pennsylvania landscape and fashioned Philadelphia's layout. He hoped these measures might convince additional settlers to make the journey to his fledgling colony. He connected colonial power with demographic growth. As a result, he marketed his colony not only to residents of the British Isles, but also to Protestants in Europe. The decision to reach out to continental Protestants, specifically Germans, as potential settlers affected public health in several ways. Foreign migration, which was often accompanied by disease due to the tragic circumstances aboard ship, soon was seen as contagion. The association of the stranger with sickness brought about discrimination. Colonists wondered whether foreign bodies could be incorporated into the British body politic. Public health measures, including quarantine and the establishment of medical institutions, developed to help the ailing.

Philadelphia's contributions to the Enlightenment also highlight the connections between politics and public health. Benjamin Franklin embodied the era's devotion to association and improvement. He championed the Pennsylvania Hospital as a means of improving the well-being of the city and its ailing people. Philadelphians and other Pennsylvanians also participated in the Enlightenment exchange of knowledge. American colonists sent

samples of all sorts to England and Europe for analysis and took advantage of the opportunity to study in cities, like Edinburgh, that led in medical education. Yet, as the political atmosphere in the colonies became inflamed by the revolutionary crises of the 1760s and 1770s, American medical students abroad united in the face of British condescension and heavy-handedness.

Finger also studies Philadelphia's role in the Revolution and the early national period. He proves how "the war played a crucial part in transforming Philadelphia's medical community" (86). Medical practitioners gained experience and prestige, associated with military and political leaders, and came to understand the significance of public health programs. Medical veterans of the Revolution continued to lead the city after the war. They founded the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, advocated for health reform, and contributed to city institutions like the dispensary. The yellow fever epidemics of the 1790s tested the power of these medical leaders and their political colleagues. Fear of the disease divided health professionals and even separated the new United States, as neighboring states feared the introduction of disease via trade.

The author completed an impressive amount of primary source research. He coupled archival manuscripts with published material and consulted documents from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Finger includes examples of visual primary sources, such as maps, a frontispiece, and a sketch, in his narrative so that the reader can see the connections between public health and politics.

Overall, the book works well. One weakness that detracts from Finger's otherwise fine work is the author's tendency to move quickly from one topic to another without adequate analysis. For example, after analyzing the incorporation of Germans into the Pennsylvania body politic, Finger abruptly discusses the forced resettlement of Acadians in Pennsylvania. His investigation of the Acadian experience lasts for only three pages.

Despite this weakness, Finger's book succeeds. Historians of medicine will appreciate the author's study of politics and medicine. Students of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania history will find a story of how the city and the state debated and dealt with issues related to public health.

KAROL K. WEAVER  
*Susquehanna University*

Peter Charles Hoffer. *When Benjamin Franklin Met the Reverend Whitefield: Enlightenment, Revival, and the Power of the Printed Word* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011). Pp. 168. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$55.00.

*When Benjamin Franklin Met the Reverend Whitefield* is part of The Johns Hopkins University Press series “Witness to History,” of which Peter Charles Hoffer is an editor. These books are short, secondary source–based volumes geared toward an undergraduate audience. In that genre, Hoffer’s book works well. It is deeply attuned to the scholarly literature, not only on Franklin and Whitefield, but on the eighteenth-century Atlantic world generally.

Hoffer is adept at packaging the current state of the historiography in ways that will remain interesting to students; for instance, in an evocative section on London as the key hub in the Anglo-American commercial empire, Hoffer tells us that “coffee, tea, sugar, chocolate, and other imported caffeinates and energy sources kept the middle classes at their desks longer. . . . Sugar made tea and coffee as popular as alcoholic beverages, and far more likely to keep one awake and busy than beer” (47). Such passages have abundant citations in endnotes, not just to books in general, but to specific references within them.

Franklin and Whitefield are representative, for Hoffer, as ambitious, self-fashioning men of the eighteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic world. Franklin is the great advocate of Enlightenment, Whitefield of Awakening. Given the nature of the book, few details here will surprise scholarly experts, but Hoffer comfortably weaves Franklin and Whitefield’s life stories with the Atlantic histories of Philadelphia, Boston, London, Bristol, and other significant locales.

Hoffer paints a convincing picture of Franklin and Whitefield’s friendship and respective worlds, but while he overtly admires Franklin, he never seems quite comfortable with Whitefield. Much of this is a matter of tone. The “needy” Whitefield, a “master of manipulating the emotions,” preached out of his “neediness,” Hoffer contends, winning over people whose middle-class “anxiety . . . bred the need to find and adhere to evangelical preaching” (41, 47, 64).

More substantially, Hoffer suggests that even as Whitefield “clung” to the prescriptions of his Calvinist theology, the preacher was surprised that Calvin’s stern God would save so many in the Great Awakening (20, 48). I see no evidence that Whitefield’s (or Edwards’s, or others’) surprise about the revivals was shaped by Calvinism. Calvinists do not profess to know how many people God intends ultimately to save. But this book holds that

Whitefield wittingly or unwittingly undermined Calvinist theology by preaching, in Hoffer's words, that "rebirth was the first step that a person could take on the road to salvation" (91).

This reflects a common misunderstanding of Calvinism: critics have often been perplexed at how Calvinists could preach a gospel of free grace, when they knew that only the elect could respond. But that theological tension was evidently no problem for Whitefield, Edwards, or the Calvinist evangelicals who dominated America's Great Awakening. Rebirth, they preached, was not a "step" that anyone could take him- or herself, nor did that experience put the reborn on the "road" to salvation; it was salvation itself, accomplished by God's grace and power.

Some of Hoffer's approach to evangelicals seems informed by present concerns: he tells us that because Whitefield believed in the divine origin and authority of Scripture, he would be termed a "fundamentalist" if he were around today (58). Similarly, from his "modern perspective," Hoffer asserts that Whitefield's childhood sins, meticulously described in the itinerant's account of his early life, simply mean that he was a "normal child—craving attention and acting out to get it." But, in Hoffer's reading, we don't know whether Whitefield's autobiography reflects his "actual experience" anyway (38). Ultimately, Whitefield's piety here is a "mask" and an "affectation" (49). Because of these skeptical assessments of the itinerant, the book struggles to explain what made Whitefield so driven, and so compelling.

Yet Hoffer does see merit in Whitefield. The itinerant's real significance actually lies within his ostensible, unstated rejection of Calvinism, which made him the "ultimate democrat" of his time, even more than Franklin (124). He and Franklin both knew the power of print media, an understanding that helped seal their long-term friendship and business relationship, with Franklin happily printing Whitefield's journals and sermons in spite of his theological objections to them. Both were masters of rhetoric, Franklin of the written word, Whitefield the spoken.

It is clearer why Franklin matters to Hoffer. He is emblematic of a secular, scientific, pragmatic, optimistic mindset that represents, in Hoffer's unabashedly modernist view, the best of the American tradition. Whitefield's primary legacy lies in America's sheer religiosity, which Hoffer tells us we can see "Sunday morning on the roads" in northeast Georgia and across the Bible Belt (129). Megachurches with packed parking lots and high-tech productions—these are Whitefield's most enduring contributions today.

Unfortunately, Hoffer intones in his concluding paragraph, in some of those churches “religious belief once again has turned to harsh judgments of those who are not among the saved” (131).

THOMAS S. KIDD  
*Baylor University*

David Schuyler. *Sanctified Landscape: Writers, Artists, and the Hudson River Valley, 1820–1909* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). Pp. xii, 206. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Seen from a car passing over the Tappan Zee Bridge or an overlook in one of the towns that hug its shores, the Hudson River presents a deceptive sense of calm and timelessness. It is an essential part of the furniture of American history, providing a reliable scaffolding for episodes that are often recalled dutifully, if a bit dimly: the Revolutionary War, the invented Knickerbocker history of Washington Irving, and the group of nineteenth-century artists now known as the Hudson River School. David Schuyler’s book, a study of the literary and visual culture created by an elite group of writers, artists, and other tastemakers in the Hudson Valley between 1820 and 1909, helps overturn that deathless and static image. His book bristles with odd and surprising details that make clear how intensely human activity shaped those landscapes. Irving’s cottage in Tarrytown, New York, for instance, boasted a lake in the shape of the Mediterranean and a “vaguely Spanish” pagoda (53). Just as telling is Irving’s indignant reaction as his “snuggery” was invaded by the “infernal alarum” of a railway line (56).

Schuyler argues that the Hudson River’s landscapes were “sanctified” by writers, artists and tourists, and this material makes up much of the first half of his book. He begins with a chapter on tourism, focusing on its paradoxical “pattern of exploitation and development” (25), and follows with a chapter on “The Artist’s River,” looking at Thomas Cole’s prescient objections to the depredations of industry, particularly in and around his beloved Hudson River. Two more chapters (“The Writer’s River” and “The River in a Garden”) examine the efforts of two writers, Irving and Nathaniel Parker Willis, and a landscape gardener, Andrew Jackson Downing, to domesticate the landscapes of the Hudson River with charming estates that took advantage of the area’s natural beauty. These topics have been frequently addressed,

and, although Schuyler adds some fresh and engaging material, they will be familiar to readers acquainted with historiography of the Hudson River School, a scholarly trail that itself wends its way all the way back to the nineteenth century.

Schuyler's most original contribution, however, is to look at the ways in which these sanctified landscapes were profaned, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the last four chapters of the book form a slow chronicle of loss, as the beauty, natural resources, and historically significant sites of the Hudson River Valley were compromised or destroyed. In chapter 5, "Change and Continuity at Mid-Century," Schuyler considers three Hudson River towns (Newburgh, Kingston, and Poughkeepsie) as new factories and the largely Irish and German immigrants who worked in them changed the built and natural environments and their relationship to the waterfront. The chapter also contains an extended inquiry into the move to save George Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters at Newburgh. The material contained in the chapter can sometimes be unwieldy for the reader, however, and this is emblematic of the book's weaknesses. Wide-ranging in more ways than one, *Sanctified Landscape* covers a great amount of material geographically and methodologically. Chapter 5, for example, looks at social, economic, and environmental change in three towns, a tall order indeed, while also addressing the historic preservation of a revered monument in one of them. After that, the limited focus of the following chapter, "Elegy for the Hudson River School," is a tonic as the author addresses a different kind of relic, the painter Jervis McEntee. His journal and later life form a melancholy record of what the new cosmopolitanism looked like from the losing side, that of the second-generation Hudson River School painters who saw the value of their works tumble as a "perfect deluge" of foreign pictures, in McEntee's words, flooded the market (123). The chapter is deeply insightful and informative, and one emerges with a vivid sense not only of McEntee's decline, but of his brother-artists' as well.

The final two chapters end on a note of loss tempered with possibility. Chapter 7 details the local environmentalism of naturalist John Burroughs, whom Henry James called "a sort of reduced, but also more humorous, more available, and more sociable Thoreau" (137). The final chapter tells the story of the largely forgotten 1909 Hudson-Fulton celebration, an event that New York elites hoped would encourage a very specific kind of public memory that, as we know from Schuyler's account, had been slowly

#### BOOK REVIEWS

declining for some time. The celebration was a flop. Schuyler's account of the crash of the replica ship *Half Moon*, which was deeply embarrassing to the organizers, and of parade floats depicting Revolutionary War battles to crowds of potentially confused or unimpressed immigrants emphasizes that it is human activity that shapes the Hudson River's sublime landscapes, not the other way around. The river, it seems, keeps rolling.

CATHERINE HOLOCHWOST

*La Salle University*

## CONTRIBUTORS

FRANK BRUCKERL holds a BS degree in corporate communication and public relations from Drexel University, Philadelphia. While at Drexel, he worked as a Humanities Fellow with the Department of History and Politics and received a first-place award for original research presented at the College of Arts and Sciences' Research Day 2012. Currently employed in the legal industry as an information technology and marketing professional, he is an independent scholar and lecturer on both local history and the Western Mystery Tradition.

ROSS HASSIG, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma, has written several books on Latin America: *Trade, Tribute, and Transportation: The Sixteenth-Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1985); *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); *War and Society in Ancient Mesoamerica* (University of California Press, 1992); *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* (1994; 2nd ed., Longman, 2006); *Time, History, and Belief in Aztec and Colonial Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 2001). In retirement he has been studying prisoners of war during the War of 1812.

KENNETH C. WOLENSKY is president of the Pennsylvania Historical Association. A historian and author, he worked with Governor Leader to publish his biography, *The Life of Governor George M. Leader: Challenging Complacency*, published in 2011 by Lehigh University Press.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Call for Proposals**  
**“The Place of Pennsylvania”**  
**Pennsylvania Historical Association**  
**2014 Annual Meeting**  
**November 6–8, 2014**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

The Pennsylvania Historical Association invites proposals for the 2014 PHA annual meeting in Philadelphia, November 6–8, 2014, at the Doubletree Hotel. The program committee is especially interested in session or paper proposals that address the conference theme, “The Place of Pennsylvania.” Topics could include examinations of Pennsylvania as a place, whether geographical, political, or imagined, as well as those that look at the “place” of Pennsylvania in its region(s) (e.g., Mid-Atlantic, Ohio Valley, Great Lakes, Northeast), the nation, and the world. Papers or sessions on particular places, or sites, within Pennsylvania, or on events that are tied to specific places or sites are also encouraged. The committee also welcomes sessions that look at the role of place in public history or of the history of local communities or places in teaching. Places are built, inhabited, despoiled, preserved, revitalized, and more. This conference seeks to look at the meaning of place, large and small, throughout the commonwealth’s history.

While the program committee encourages full session proposals, it also accepts proposals for individual papers as well as proposals from undergraduate and graduate students for poster sessions. Proposals must be submitted electronically by February 3, 2014, to: <https://sites.google.com/site/pha2014meeting/home>. All participants must be members of the Pennsylvania Historical Association at the time of the meeting.

For further information, please contact Tamara Gaskell (Historical Society of Pennsylvania) at [tgaskell@hsp.org](mailto:tgaskell@hsp.org).

### **Call for Student Research Proposals**

#### **“The Place of Pennsylvania”**

**Pennsylvania Historical Association 2014 Annual Meeting**

**November 6–8, 2014**

**Philadelphia, PA**

Recognizing the importance of introducing the next generation of scholars and teachers to the best practices of the profession, the Pennsylvania Historical Association is pleased to announce the inclusion of a poster session for student research at its 2014 Annual Meeting. Proposals must list a faculty mentor and may include up to three students per proposal. The proposals may consist of topics focused on any historical theme, period, or methodological approach related to the Mid-Atlantic region. Students will be expected to conduct original, primary source–based research, preferably in an archival setting, during the course of their project along with significant secondary source analysis. The committee will also consider projects that address innovative techniques for teaching Pennsylvania history at the K-12 level.

Research for the project need not be completed by the May 15 application deadline, but the proposal abstract should convey a clear understanding of the historical and scholarly context of the specific subject matter. We encourage students currently working on projects to submit their proposals as soon as possible. The program committee will inform applicants and faculty mentors of their proposal’s status during the summer, with a project completion check to be confirmed by September 15. Student participants are required to be PHA members at the time of

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

the conference (note: there is a special PHA student membership rate of \$30.00).

Proposal due date: May 15, 2014

For additional information or to submit a proposal, please visit the 2014 PHA Annual Meeting website at <http://sites.google.com/site/pha2014meeting/>  
Questions may be directed to Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward at [ajdieterichward@ship.edu](mailto:ajdieterichward@ship.edu)