

"The Gilpin Mills on Brandywine"

THE  
PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE  
OF  
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

---

---

Vol. XLIX.

1925.

No. 4.

---

---

MEMOIR OF THOMAS GILPIN.

(Found among the papers of Thomas Gilpin, Jr.)

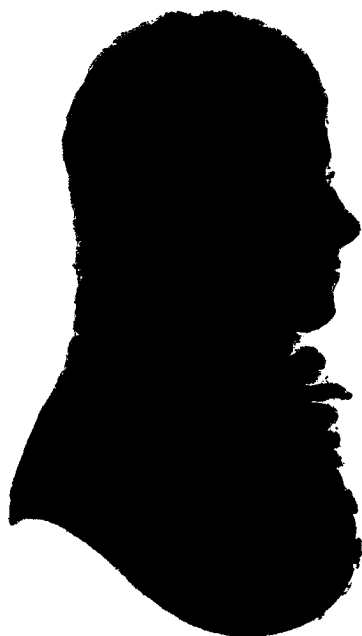
The subject of the present Memoir was descended from an ancient family still existing & extensively connected in the counties of Cumberland & Westmoreland in England. It was of Norman origin & bore the name of De Gaylpyn from an estate in Normandy, which name it retained till the time of Edward 6<sup>th</sup>. The first mention of it is in the reign of King John Anno 1206 when it obtained the grant of Kentmere, a manor seated upon the head a Mere or Lake of the river Kent in Westmoreland near the borders of Cumberland; with this Manor it obtained also the family arms—a Boar on a field Or—and it afterward added the adjoining Manor of Illwithwaite.

At Kentmere eleven sucefsive generations are known to have resided, till the estate was lost in the civil wars and the family was restored at Scaleby Castle in Cumberland. In the reign of Henry 8<sup>th</sup>. Mary & Elizabeth lived Bernard Gilpin, stiled the Apostle of the North and George Gilpin Minister for Queen Elizabeth to the Hague These were the second & fourth sons of Edwyn Gilpin of Kentmere but neither of them had children—William however their eldest brother

had several—of whom the second son was Martin who had Thomas Gilpin of Mill Hill near Caton in Lancashire and he had Thomas Gilpin of Worborough near Oxford—This Thomas was an officer in the civil wars and with Thomas West who had married his sister fought as Colonel & Major in the battle of Worcester—after which they turned quakers and it is said built the meeting house at Dorchester also near Oxford—This Thomas Gilpin had three sons—Thomas—Isaac and Joseph—the last of whom married Alice Glover of Ichrenswell near Southhampton in 1691 and with his Cousin John West came to Pennsylvania, bringing with him a daughter, Hannah—a son, Samuel and a daughter Rachel born on the pafsage—It is said that on the marriage of Joseph Gilpin the Uncle of his wife presented her with two warrants for lands obtained from William Penn from which were procured two tracts near Birmingham Meeting house in Chester county Pennsylvania one of which is still owned by Isaac Gilpin and the other was sold from the family within a few years past on the death of Gideon Gilpin.

This land was the original residence of the family and the Cave is still existing in which they pafsed the first winter—Joseph Gilpin had a numerous family & lived to see fifteen of his children married—Samuel his eldest son married Jane Parker of Philadelphia, and settled at Gilpin's bridge on the North East in Cecil county Maryland, where he had four sons and two daughters—of these Joseph the eldest settled at Elkton and was distinguished in public life both before & after the Revolution—Thomas was the second son—Samuel retained the family estate at Gilpin's bridge and was a Major in the Revolutionary Army—George settled near Alexandria in Virginia and was Colonel of a regiment with which he accompanied Gen'l Washington to Boston on his first taking the command of the Army

Mary married Colonel George Grist of Baltimore



THOMAS GILPIN.  
1776—1853

and Rachel married George Evans Esq<sup>r</sup>. of Chester County Pennsylvania.

Thomas Gilpin the object of this Memoir was born on the 18 day of March 1727—At that time the very recent settlement of America presented very slender means of education, especially in the country where the chief mode of obtaining it was from settlers who kept small schools or persons coming out who were purchased as servants in families—the best education they could give seldom amounted to more than reading and writing English and the common Rules of Arithmetic—Such an education Thomas Gilpin received, but he soon evinced a strong inclination for the Mathematics which he taught himself whilst a youth so as to become in after life an excellent practical navigator & surveyor; his studies he also extended to several branches of literature particularly natural history and natural philosophy which he afterwards successfully cultivated—

On his coming of age his father gave him for an outset in life a tract of land on the river Susquehanna, but this he never settled & sold it a few years afterwards.

The sweetnefs of his temper & enterprizing disposition early attracted the regard of his Uncle Thomas Gilpin, a gentleman of fortune, one of the earliest settlers of the town of Wilmington where he resided, who told his brother Samuel that he might take care of the rest of his children but that he should provide for his son Thomas, having no children of his own; and this he accomplished by his afsistance thro' life & making his nephew his principal heir.

This Uncle afsociated Thomas Gilpin in several purchases & improvements in the neighbourhood of Wilmington, among the rest the embankment of Cherry Island Marsh, but his principal object was to engage him in the improvement of the estate on Brandywine

where the Paper Mills are now erected—this the Uncle had purchased so early as the year 1745 and built on it a corn mill which was the second on that part of Brandywine but the genius of the nephew had early led him to form a plan for going abroad and to visit the country of his family from which they had so recently sprung; Accordingly he set out upon this expedition with his Uncles consent and assistance.

Mr. Gilpin was at this time in his twenty-fifth year and the particulars of his journeys in England are recorded in a very accurate journal. The object of it was general & particularly mercantile information & it seems to have been conducted with great neatness and economy. He embarked at Wilmington on the 27<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1752 in the brig                      Capt. Amos Jones for Dublin, where he arrived after a stormy passage on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Jan<sup>r</sup>. 1753. Here he remained upwards of two months and formed many respectable acquaintance among whom he mentions two gentlemen of the name of Clibborn, a Mr. Sandwith and others; on the 24<sup>th</sup> March he embarked for Whitehaven and landed there the following day. Here he found several of the Cumberland branch of his family by whom he was received with great kindness. A M<sup>rs</sup>. Gilpin whom I saw at Carlisle in 1795, then in her 90<sup>th</sup> year, remembered him & spoke of him as a young man of very amiable deportment; he seems also to have been recognised as a relation by a family of the name of Ecclestone. While at Whitehaven he paid great attention to the collieries of Sir James Lowther and speaks of a steam engine as one of extraordinary powers, perhaps one of the greatest of the day—From Whitehaven he went with one of the M<sup>r</sup>. Ecclestons to Aglionbury near Carlisle; here it seems he was received by another of the Ecclestons and saw several of his family in that neighbourhood when he returned to Whitehaven & passing by Cocher-moluth traversed the whole extent of the Lakes &

Mountains of Cumberland & Westmoreland to Kendal. It was now the commencement of the spring and this country yet bore much of the appearance of winter; he remarks that the higher mountains Skiddaw & Helvellyn were still covered with snow and he frequently saw heavy clouds rolling beneath him—From Kendal he passed by Milnthorpe to Lancaster and remarks the rugged limestone rocks of that country—At Lancaster he had several friends with whom he remained several days and then passed to Liverpool where he found many more & a wide field for his curiosity. Passing from thence he went by Coalbrooke Dale and the vale of the Severn to Oxford, Dorchester and Reading Here he found himself in the immediate seat of his family and at Reading found many relations who treated him with great kindness; from thence he went to London where he found many friends & remained some time, when returning to Whitehaven he embarked and returned home.

Soon after his return Mr. Gilpin purchased the estate at the Head of Chester Kent C°. Maryland—this at first consisted of about 300 acres, part of a tract called London Bridge but by successive purchases he extended it to upwards of 1000 acres & patented a part of it anew under the name of Gilpinton. At that time the whole seems to have been unimproved; but embracing the confluence of the two branches of Chester river at the head of the Navigation and main road thro' the Peninsula and from Chester town into Delaware it offered very eligible advantages for founding a town and forming a scene of improvement. These accordingly Mr. Gilpin began by building a mill; store house and dwelling house and soon after a tavern tan yard and other improvements which invited other settlers and has at length produced the town of Millington. For a number of years Mr. Gilpin lived a happy life & very much improved his fortune at this place. In this

immediate vicinity of the Head of Chester there were not many settlers of distinction at that time tho' there were two of importance whose lands adjoined him—viz, Mr. Dennis Delany whose large Manor adjoined him on the North and James Tilghman, father of the late William Tilghman Chief Justice of Penn<sup>a</sup>. The adjoining counties however of Cecil Kent & Queen Anns were thickly studded with some of the best gentry in America, and Annapolis formed during the winter a little court under the proprietary government of Lord Baltimore, which presented a rich afsemblage of the Maryland planters—With these Mr. Gilpin was extensively acquainted and his letters mention numbers of them as his intimate friends, particularly Col. Tasker, Mr. Ogle, Lloyd, Johnson, and Jennings who filled important offices in the Province—

The course of his business however drew Mr. Gilpin much to Philadelphia, where he formed an acquaintance with the family of Mr. Joshua Fisher which led to his marriage with Lydia his second daughter. Upon this marriage which took place in 1764 Mr. Gilpin agreed to settle in Philadelphia, which he actually accomplished sometime before the marriage took place and thenceforth made it his principal residence—His estate in Maryland however still claimed a considerable portion of his time and the death of his Uncle Thomas Gilpin who left him considerable estates at Wilmington formed an additional claim upon his attention: his time therefore became very much divided between the three places.

Having thus settled in life and acquired an easy fortune Mr. Gilpin devoted a part of his time to what had always been an object of real enjoyment to him his improvement in the pursuits of philosophy and public institutions. At that time men of deep erudition existed not in the British Provinces, for even the professional men in law, physic and divinity were like other men of



businesses compelled to use their pursuits for their living, but the example of Dr. Franklin who had now resided many years in Philadelphia had stimulated many men in the respectable walks of life to attain like himself considerable distinction in science, and he had actually formed around him an extensive group who filled the stations of public life & set on foot many plans of improvement. With these Mr. Gilpin became early acquainted and particularly with Dr. Franklin, with whom he maintained a correspondence which will be hereafter noticed—Two clubs or societies for collecting books had been formed which gave rise in 1731 to the Philadelphia Library and two Societies for the promotion of useful knowledge which eventuated in the American Philosophical Society formed in 1769 under the immediate auspices of Dr. Franklin, of both of which Mr Gilpin was among the first members and began his part in supplying them and particularly the last with useful papers in which the interests of the country in which he had formerly resided was not forgotten, especially as it then formed one of the most valuable sources of the trade of Philadelphia.

About the year 1762 the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware formed the finest wheat district in the British Provinces; but it then became all at once so deplorably ravaged by the Wheat Fly as to threaten almost the loss of its cultivation; to this insect Mr. Gilpin devoted his attention to trace its history and natural character and to discover a remedy for its evils. In its history it was found to originate in some wheat imported into Carolina from the western provinces of France where it had committed such ravages especially in the province Anguemaer as to occasion a deputation of the Academy of Paris to M. du Homel and Tillet to investigate: In its natural history it was found to consist of an egg which concealed in the stalk during the winter produced a fly in the spring which impregnated

the growing crop—after many experiments on the subject Mr. Gilpin advised as a remedy to thrash out the grain early in the autumn to burn or bury the straw & to pack the grain itself in close vessels or granaries so as to destroy the egg & cut off the communication with the ensuing crop—It was found however that the ravages of this insect were much confined to the soil and climate of the south, that it did not extend beyond the 40<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude and even within those limits not to rocky or hard soils; The papers of Mr. Gilpin on this subject were addressed to the Legislature of Maryland, to printed handbills for the instruction of the farmers and lastly as the insect and its ravages continued for many years to papers addressed to the Philosophical Society. The result of this insect was that either from the remedies used or from some natural cause it at length very much disappeared and been supplanted by other depredators.

The next object of his attention was to set on foot a navigable canal from the waters of Delaware to Chesapeake. From the earliest discovery of the country the near approach of the heads of the streams on each side which left passes of only ten to fifteen miles between them had created attention and it is said that Capt Smith in exploring the head of the Chesapeake Bay in 1608 discovered from Gray's hill which overhangs Elkton the river Delaware & Bite of Newcastle which he took for its immediate mouth or entrance to the ocean: But loch navigation tho' it had existed in Italy France and Holland was totally unattended to by the English so that except a few trifling attempts at improving river navigation on the Medway & Sankey there existed no canal until that of the Duke of Bridgewater—This was begun in 1757, but the subject was talked of some years before and it is probable whilst Mr. Gilpin was in England—It was however sufficiently public a few years afterwards and no doubt

drew attention to practicable pafses. It was a great pecuniary object to Mr. Gilpin to open that from the Head of Chester to Duck Creek and accordingly he began the survey of it first himself personally and afterwards with the afsistance of one or two Gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Of these surveys eight or nine maps sections and estimates, drawn by himself, are existing: the result was that a canal could be formed with the utmost ease about 13 miles in length from one navigable water to the other thro' a country of easy digging and little elevation and abundantly supplied with water at an expence of about 90.000 dollars.

The subject having excited attention at other pafses Mr. Gilpin with the afsistance of Mr. Cantwell and Mr. Rumsey two landholders of the neighbourhood, surveyed the pafses from the safsafra & the Bohemia to the Appoquinimink—This was a shorter distance but the ground was more elevated but it was estimated that a canal of not more than ten miles could be formed at an expence of not more than 100.000 dollars—He then surveyed a third pafs from Back Creek to St. Georges and another from the same point to the Red Lion Creek—These were very much over the same ground as the Canal since executed, but the ground was here again higher, tho' the Canal was found to be quite practicable at the distance of 12 or 14 miles and at the same expence—about \$100.000—a fourth route was then surveyed acrofs the most accustomed pafs of the Peninsula for land carriage that is from the landing on Elk river to Christiana bridge a distance of about 12 Miles and found quite practicable at about the same expence—In this survey Mr. Gilpin was afsisted by his brother Joseph and several gentlemen of Wilmington and Elkton.

The ascertaining that a navigable canal might thus be formed acrofs the Peninsula at four important points excited no small interest and left it only to be

decided which was the most practicable—There were however other difficulties at the moment; the undertaking was new and there was no apparent mode by which the funds could be supplied. It became therefore the object of discussion for several years and at length was brought by Mr. Gilpin before the American Philosophical Society which had become the great resort for designs of useful improvement

A subscription being formed by the citizens of Philadelphia for the expenses of a re-survey one of the first acts of the Society upon its organization was to appoint a committee of nine members among whom was Mr. Gilpin to effect it: accordingly this committee attended to the business in the winter of 1769—1770 when it formed an opinion that the Canal from the Head of Chester to Duck Creek was too far down the Peninsula—that from Bohemia to Appoquinimink too expensive—those from Long Creek and Broad Creek branches of Back Creek both very practicable as also was that from Christiana bridge to Elk which was resurveyed by Mr. Gilpin and his field book is still existing. By this time however the attention of the citizens of Phil<sup>a</sup>. had become awakened to other routes to the capital particularly from the river Susquehanna and after the survey of the Canal Mr. Gilpin with some other members proceeded to trace a route for a road from Christiana bridge to Peach bottom above the Black-friars falls to which the upper navigation was deemed safe, this road was deemed highly practicable its length 32 Miles and an expense of \$                    with this closed the labors of the committee of which a report was made in May 1770—printed in the 1<sup>st</sup> vol. of the Society's Transactions; subsequently however a road was traced from the same point at Peach bottom direct to Phil<sup>a</sup> another from Wright's ferry and a third from Harris's ferry to Reading—these were the works of other citizens but still later a canal was traced from the Susquehanna

below the Conewingo falls to Phil<sup>a</sup>.; which was done by Mr. Rittenhouse, Mr. Gilpin and Mr. Samuel Reves and a map of the whole country was made for the society and published with the report the original of which is among Mr. Gilpin's papers—besides these the subject was discufsed in many publications of the day and it is probable that the work would have been taken up but for the public troubles and revolutionary war which soon ensued.

In the year 1766 there occurred the periodical visit of the American Locust which was investigated by Mr. Gilpin and a paper accompanied by specimens preserved in spirits was presented to the Society; the result of this was that the decided period of this insect's appearance was 17 years, which was proved by its last appearance in 1749, that it was quite different from the annual locust of the country, being much smaller, singing differently & about 5000 times greater in number: its first appearance was in the middle of April when it came out of the ground in such numbers as to perforate it in many places like an honey comb: its form was that of a large bug which in the course of a few days became a large fly which began to sing & continued almost without intermifsion during the life & even after many of their hind parts had dried or fallen off—the males were furnished with a tube or bladder under each wing—the females with a hard sharp & finely polished lance under the hind part of their trunk, with which they made incisions into the limbs & boughs of trees, shrubs or bushes almost without distinction, in which they inserted their eggs in immense quantities resembling those of a house fly; soon after which both male and female died or were devoured, being the prey of beasts, birds & other insects—tho' from the beginning they seemed to take no food themselves and about the middle of May disappeared after which in about six weeks their eggs pro-

duced a small green bug which fell on the ground and soon made its way into it after which it was found in digging wells & other excavations to the depth of 15 feet. It is necessary however in order to fully understand the subject to consult the papers furnished on the occasion.

Several other objects of Natural History claimed the attention of Mr. Gilpin about this time the following of which are remembered

First—The Garr-fish—*Esox Ofsius* of Linnaus a species of pike which frequents the waters of the Chesapeake

The *Clupea Encrasicolus*—or Anchovy which is also found in that bay

The extensive strata of Fossil shells which is found both on the eastern and western shores of the bay particularly in the neighbourhood of Choptank and Upper Marlborough

The charred wood or coal which is found at certain depths in great quantities in the Peninsula.

On all these subjects papers are known to have been prepared by Mr. Gilpin and specimens to accompany them but the papers have been in a great degree lost and mislaid.

These peaceful studies of the country became however interrupted by the political feeling which the conduct of England engendered; it is extremely well known that during the war with France which was ended by the peace of 1763 the vigor and increasing wealth of the Colonies had become conspicuous and for the first time perhaps made a serious impression upon Great Britain and led to measures at once to command the one and obtain a revenue from the other. The first of these measures was to send over troops which were stationed in regular garrisons or barracks one of which for 1000 men was erected in the Northern Liberties of Phil<sup>a</sup>.; these troops were to be supported by taxes

raised by Great Britain and paid by the Colonies among which was the celebrated Stamp Act passed in 1765 but universally opposed by the Colonies and repealed the following year but succeeded by other taxes. The ferment which these occasioned led to the First Congress at New York in 1767—to many resolutions and innumerable publications maintaining the rights of the Colonies and disputing the power of Great Britain to tax them—Among the writers on this occasion Mr. Gilpin distinguished himself by several publications and by an animated public conduct in favor of the rights of his country. It is well known that the dissensions begun upon this occasion, though allayed by partial concessions never subsided until they burst into flame & produced the Revolutionary war. From the period of 1765 therefore the country may be considered as affected by feelings which more or less disturbed its tranquillity tho' it did not prevent the increase of its prosperity & useful institutions.

In the year 1768 Mr. Gilpin presented to the Philosophical Society the essay & model of an hydraulic machine by which one crank worked by horizontal wings was applied to three pumps or cylinders to raise water. The essay on this machine is published in the first vol. of the Society's Transactions, but the machine itself appeared so much more applicable to the mines & other works of Europe than to any then existing in the Provinces that Mr. Gilpin sent it to Dr. Franklin with whom it produced the following letters & extracts of letters in which politics, improvements and inventions became soon blended together: the first item of this correspondence is the extract of a letter from Mr. Gilpin to the Doctor dated Jan<sup>y</sup>. 29<sup>th</sup> 1769

“The sentiments of our Sovereign and disposition of Parliament received by the last advices affect the people here with great surprize & increasing suspicion—I hope & trust they will not determine in a desperate

opposition, but be firmly & coolly met as an arbitrary advance; they will however occasion great alarm; demands made without consultation or even our knowing the object of them can only be considered in a desperate light; I wish sincerely ministerial wisdom may present some more favorable measures, otherwise both our trade & affections will be lost; we are denied the right of complaining, it is even looked upon as idle & contemptuous in us to do so—the debts & expences of England are certainly very great, but who are the creditors & who the debtors, who the burthened & who impose the burthens?—will not the expensive & lucrative plan of the nation itself bear correction & ought it not to be attempted before the weight is imposed upon us?"

2.—"Feb<sup>ry</sup>. 6<sup>th</sup>. 1769—Our last advices of ministerial & parliamentary measures has revived the motion of a non-importation of manufactures from Great Britain; for myself I should have rather preferred to confine it to particular articles suited to the convenience of each colony which would have sufficiently established the principles we acted upon & proclaimed the exigency we complain of but such is the alarm the attempt to abridge our liberties has given that nothing can arrest it. Laws without representation are rejected & held in abhorrence, in every shape they are presented: a fair representation of the colonies with an influence according to their magnitude & pecuniary requisitions made of them seem at this time to be considered as vague & idle attempts foreign to our rights & abilities, but should some reasonable measures be proposed & the choice in some degree left to ourselves there is no doubt we should act correctly."

3. Same date—"This day a non importation resolution has been adopted & it now seems that nothing will ever open the connection again but an exemption from the burthens attempted to be laid on us unless they are done by those whom we may chuse"



4. Doct<sup>r</sup>. Benj. Franklin, Philadelphia May 16<sup>th</sup>. 1769.  
Worthy Friend

By the brig Ketly Capt. Osborne I have sent you the model of a machine the result of a thought occurring to me some time ago which I have realised in the present form. It is that of an horizontal windmill applied to three pumps—this application as one of the most useful for raising water from lands, draining mines or pumping ships in distrefs at sea; but if the first movement be found effective it may be applied to all the various uses of other windmills, without the inconvenience of turning the house or frame to the wind—I could mention some further objects that have occurred to me on the subject but I daresay they will present themselves to you; when you have examined the model if you think the invention of sufficient importance I would thank you to have it shewn to the Society of Arts or made public in any way you may think it merits—the necessity of regulating & stopping the motion of the mill will no doubt occur to you; that part of it I have omitted at present from want of time, but it is very easy, nearly as much so as that of stopping a water mill & I shall have it fixed to another model I am preparing for the Philosophical Society here. Your sentiments on this invention at a leisure moment will be very gratifying & esteemed a particular favor

by your friend Thomas Gilpin.

P. S. I have an idea that this machine with some alterations would answer well in a current of water.

5. Sir London July 10<sup>th</sup>. 1769.

I received your favor per Capt. Osborne with the model of your machine for raising water. The manner in which you have applied a single crank for the working of three pumps wherein the whole force is applied to each & yet in such quick succefsion that there is no

lofs of time appears to me so extremely ingenious that I have scarce ever seen a new invention that gave me greater pleasure; and I am persuaded with you that it may be of great use in draining mines, quarries &c I intend to exhibit it to the Society of Arts when they meet in November next & believe it will meet with their approbation.

I am Sir  
your most obt, hbl Serv<sup>t</sup>.  
B. Franklin.

6. Dr B. Franklin                      Philadelphia Oct<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1769  
Worthy Friend

By Capt. Falconer I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of 10<sup>th</sup> July. Your approbation & intention of exhibiting my machine to the Society of Arts gives me great pleasure & claims my sincere thanks & I hope it will meet with improvement & become beneficial to the public—What I am now going to add fills me with doubt whether or not it may not prove more zealous than useful while your time is so much occupied with other objects; but as my intention is to promote public benefit I shall communicate the outlines of the proceedings of the committee appointed to view the ground & investigate the probability of a Canal between the tide waters of the Chesapeake & Delaware Bays'' Here follows a brief description of the surveys of the three or four routes nearly in the words already given to which is added the surveys & remarks upon the navigation of Susquehanna which give more interesting details of that river & shew what was done & thought upon the subject at that infant period; these therefore seem to require more notice & they are as follows they are also preceded & combined with some remarks on the sentiments of the people of Maryland at that time on both parts of the project.

It is said that the inhabitants of Maryland will be

averse to this Canal as it may lessen the profits of the carriage & prevent the growth of the small towns at the head of the tide waters, but in this I apprehend they are mistaken for it is evident that their present trade is divided amongst so many small ports that it is rendered weak for want of great leading markets—the inhabitants of their back country are now compelled to resort to Philadelphia at great expence but if this Canal was open boats would ply acrofs & afford the option of markets on either Bay which would attract all produce to the head of the Chesapeake & of course into Maryland itself where its own ports would have the first offer; but in all events the object of both markets would attract produce to that quarter instead of going round by sea as a great part of it certainly now does; thus the western trade & that of the various waters of the Chesapeake would be drawn to one great centre & the town formed for the sale of their own produce not only by the easy navigation of the Chesapeake but by the ease also with which it might be carried to Philadelphia and I think this undoubted market which would be opened for the landed or agricultural interest would obtain a great preference over that of being confined to the ports of their own Bay & would ensure their assent to the canal.

As the Susquehanna also has of late been found navigable for boats of 4 or 5 tons nearly to its sources which extend over a great part of Pennsylvania and that navigation may doubtless be improved a canal so near its mouth would undoubtedly have the effect of drawing the produce of Pennsylvania to that quarter since it would there have the advantage of the double market and go on to Philadelphia at a saving of 50 per cent on the present carriage even from Lancaster; the same saving would occur also on the route for goods backward, as they might be sent from Philadelphia to

the Chesapeake & forwarded from thence to the westward at a considerable diminution of expence.

A great deal might be added on the subject of this canal but I know of no one who can see or appreciate its advantages better than D<sup>r</sup>. Franklin to whom I submit them & remain most sincerely

his friend

Thomas Gilpin—

P. S. Barnet who has a Furnace & Forge on a branch of the Susquehanna has in the driest part of this summer when the water was remarkably low gone with his boats backward & forward from his works down the Susquehanna to the tide and intends as I am informed to pursue the navigation—this circumstance still further magnifies the importance of the navigation of the Susquehanna & the necessity of the Canal

7. Doctor Franklin to M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin—Extract—

Dear Sir

London March 18<sup>th</sup> 1770.

“I received your favor by the hands of M<sup>r</sup>. Abel James. An accident happened to it in the chest by the breaking of a bottle of liquid which obliterated part of it—I see however that it contains some good remarks on the advantages of canal navigation in our country to which I heartily wish success: what you tell me of the practicability of navigating down the Susquehanna pleases me extremely as hitherto I had understood it to be impossible.

I wrote to you last summer that I proposed to shew your machine to the Society of Arts, since their meeting I have till now been otherwise too busy to attend to such things but I lately packed it in its box & sent it to their store and am next week to meet a Committee of them: many ingenious men have seen it at my house & were much pleased with it; what they chiefly admire is not the construction of the sails, but the application of a single crank to three separate pumps.”

The sequel of this letter which extends to seven folio pages goes into considerable detail of several modes of constructing mills & raising water which Dr. Franklin observed in the course of his travels, and a reply to his letter by Mr Gilpin treats the subject still more at length, but as it is intended to annex his letters with the other papers quoted in an appendix it is unnecessary to interrupt this narration further than simply to mention that Mr. Gilpin received the thanks of the Society of Arts as these following letters will shew

8. Gentlemen Philadelphia Sep<sup>r</sup>. 28<sup>th</sup> 1770.

I had the honor to receive your favor by your Secretary Mr. Samuel Moore about two months past wherein you are pleased to expref your approbation of my improved hydraulic windmill which I am in hopes will be still further improved and turned to some useful purposes: give me leave to afsure you that I am far from being so confident of my abilities as to be a creditor against the world for very important discoveries; but when I consider how much improvements have advanced step by step & how much is due to those who have made them before us I consider it the duty of every one to whom they occur to give his afsistance upon the subject, and that to foster & encourage these is the object of your Institution.

The remainder of this letter is devoted to the communication of a paper upon another subject, viz. the natural history of the migration of Herrings, but as this will shortly be mentioned among the communications to the American Philosophical Society we shall refer to that notice of it as its first introduction— In the meantime another subject is mentioned to Doc<sup>r</sup>. Franklin as occupying the attention of the citizens of Philadelphia among whom Mr Gilpin had engaged in it.

“The silk businefs is in a fair way and I am convinced will be of consequence if attended to—there are

also numbers of minor manufactures which would succeed if parliament would but lay on a few more duties, or as I may say bounties here, for such is the effect of their duties; it is nothing but the easy terms upon which we obtain all sorts of manufactures from abroad and the more free & relaxed life it affords that hinders our manufacturers from starting up & making a rapid progress—I should be glad to see the unanimity of the two countries restored & Great Britain succeed in her manufactures as we in ours & in our agriculture but no restrictions; at a meeting of the merchants here last night it was agreed to give notice to the other provinces of an intention to make some alterations in our own non-importation agreement so as to admit the importation of some articles which we cannot at present do without, and increase the restrictions upon others in order that it may not be said we cannot hold out until a change of ministry or policy takes place.”

There is no question that the differences which the conduct of Great Britain had occasioned & particularly the non-importation act had set on foot many manufactures & a very general disposition in the country to supply itself with those for which it had the materials and retrench the use of others. The silk business which has been mentioned was taken up with great spirit & societies formed in the cities, mulberry trees planted in the country, raw silk raised to very considerable extent in private families & the French or Italians set to manufacturing it. Many old citizens can still remember the establishment for this purpose in 7<sup>th</sup> street (where the Mint now stands) in Phil<sup>a</sup>. & many silk gowns, handkerchiefs & other useful articles which were produced.

Among other articles the manufacture of china ware was undertaken to very considerable extent—a large establishment of wooden buildings was erected for this purpose in Federal Street not far from the present

Navy yard; the clay for the purpose was obtained from the banks of the Delaware between Newcastle & Wilmington and it was mixed with calcined bones; the whole was under the direction of a Swifs or French Artist and a number of beautiful articles particularly of tea ware well shaped & painted were in use among the best families in America. It is to be noted that the manufactures of china were now very rare in England & it is a curious fact that acting partner of Mr. Wedgewood of Etreria many years afterwards told the writer of this article that he was first employed in this infant establishment at Philadelphia which was more of French than English origin.

But politics had taken such deep hold of the minds of the Colonists that they mingled with every pursuit & formed the part or the whole of every letter that was written abroad. A very few days after the foregoing it was succeeded by one still entering more fully into the subject. Dr. Franklin had originally gone to England as an agent for the colony of Penn<sup>a</sup>. alone, but his very active & patriotic spirit had made him the agent of the public spirit of the whole; in this situation his time was ardently occupied in representations of the state of the Colonies, encouraging their friends & declaiming against the measures of the government and it seemed to have been particularly his object to draw from his friends at home that information & those sentiments which might justify & support his conduct while necessity compelled him to pursue a very guarded course himself. There is no question but he was eminently supported by the intelligence his friends conveyed him and the letters & documents sent to him & which may be traced among the respectable families of the country would form a voluminous history of its sentiments if they were now to be obtained; these letters therefore of Mr. Gilpins may be considered only

---

as a small specimen of what at the time was very abundant

9 Esteemed Friend

May 17<sup>th</sup> 1770

By letters received here yesterday by Falconer, Sparks and Friend the inclination of altering the non importation agreement is discouraged tho I still think some regulations will be made on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June and if wisely done I believe it will be for the best for then it may be confidently expected that the colonies will abide by the measures they have adopted and do without one half the manufactures of Great Britain the consequence of which will be that considerable capital employed in trade will be converted to manufactures of our own as indeed has been the case already in many instances and when once these are established they will not be easily destroyed but will daily decrease the demand for foreign articles, invite the artists of England to settle among us and confirm the self-dependance and prosperity of the colonies.

Certain it is that by the adoption of a wise and paternal conduct towards us Great Britain may eminently accelerate her own prosperity and unite it with those of her colonies so that both may proceed in a happy union she as the affectionate parent and we as dutiful children:—that there are many intemperate persons on both sides there is no question and it is undeniable that there are some here who would prefer offensive measures; altho' it seems to me that every law imposed upon us by Great Britain may be rendered nugatory and the repeal of it compelled by firm defensive conduct without distressing ourselves or losing our valuable trade and in this too we should not weaken the cause by giving grounds to believe that we are actuated by ambition or revenge or afford our enemies an opportunity to triumph in our adopting measures so high that we might be compelled to rescind or be beaten from



them and especially from our non importation agreement.

I remain respectfully

Thy sincere friend

T. Gilpin.

This letter refers to the further proceedings of the colonists in June, no doubt referring to what might be done by the British Parliament during its session then existing and accordingly on the 12<sup>th</sup> April the duties were repealed, that is the duties on glafs, paper & painters colors: these were all that had been imposed in 1767 except one of 3<sup>d</sup> per pound on tea which was continued to keep up the claim of sovereignty & right of taxation & this robbed the measure of all its graciousness as it still kept up the principle of the measure which was the bone of contention more than the amount of duty: what occurred therefore upon this state of the business will be seen by the following extracts.

10.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 1770—

Since the repeal was announced and the public sentiment respecting it had time to mature itself the partiality in repealing the several other duties and leaving that on Tea seems to be considered as the effect of weakness in the ministry and an act of ill grace which can answer no end except to confirm the jealousy of their principles and the opinion of their weakness and ill intentions: the measure will drive the Americans into manufactures and frugality, a repugnance to foreign articles and to independence if the minister was hired to hasten these measures he could do it by no means so effectually as by these he has adopted and in contending for a battle of form he will lose every thing of substance: indispite of the pretended right and laws they have founded on it, we save more by it in one year than the ministry could collect in three: we save in

luxury and the gratification of our desires for which we paid a large tax to England without complaint—at present the exchange with England is extremely reduced, produce at a very reasonable price, and the country free from luxury; in this situation it must grow rich and tho' a few individuals will suffer there is not the least disposition to give up the non-importation agreement—some would have been glad if a few more articles of general necessity had been permitted as has been done in Maryland, but they seem bent not to relax in the system which has been agreed on.

June 8<sup>th</sup>.

As the late repeal of the acts in England more fully developes itself the singularity of its not taking effect till December next makes it appear the more as if the ministry had adopted a system of traps and decoys but they have alarmed the game and it will require considerable time if it ever is accomplished to forget the snares; the disposition now seems to be to adhere to the non-importation agreement untill all the acts are repealed and such repeal actually commences: the people will never be reunited while England shall attempt to impose any laws in the making of which they have no voice.

July 19<sup>th</sup>

Since my last New York has relaxed from the non-importation agreement but this and the other provinces stand fixed although we have an account here from a vessel spoken in going to Boston that the Tea duty has been taken off.

September 28<sup>th</sup>

My late letters have given some account of the state of public affairs here; my last informed thee of the relaxation of New York from the non-importation agreement but that this *with* province with the rest stood firm; since then a relaxation has also taken place

here commencing on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant; it was carried by a majority of four or five to one and orders for goods have been sent in consequence with the exception of tea and the vefsels are not to sail from London before the 15<sup>th</sup> of January; what effect this will have with you I cannot imagine but I think it will be worse than if a well digested and limited non-importation had taken place at first and been rigidly adhered to or rather added to; this however was prevented by a few obstinate individuals who overruled the general opinion and are now sorry for their conduct: some of them who were most active in the old plan are yet angry and obstinate: yesterday they had a town meeting and came to a resolution to adopt the Maryland plan or one similar to it and a Committee is going about to procure signatures for the purpose but they are not succesful as they have proceeded so imprudently that they now feel themselves entangled and defeated, and will not be able to form any measures which will command attention; those who have been suffering by their proceedings will in turn oppose them I am in hopes it will put an end to those Town meetings which have been productive rather of violence than of firm and temperate conduct.

November 15<sup>th</sup>

Politics are now rather at a low ebb: nor do I expect they will revive; it will take some time to restore the public agitation and eradicate the remembrance of what has pafsed: the cause of injury is yet fresh and like a man that has been prompted to delirium time must be allowed to restore quietude and heal the pain of exertions that have been made. I think the late blunderers here deserve thanks from your side the water as nothing could have been more effectual to weaken the measures and destroy the unanimity which prevailed a scene of intemperate violence has been too much used instead of the cool unyielding firmnefs which the state of

affairs demanded we have had summonses by ballots, town meetings, hasty resolutions made and then repealed, proclamations and measures carried by clapping, stamping hissing, hallooing &c; in fact too much of that violence which however it denotes the public feeling is inimical to the adoption of those cool measures which the state of the country and the injuries it was exposed to required.

The repeal of the obnoxious taxes produced in some degree the subsidence of the political storm but it was no more than the calm of a smothered flame which was at work to burst forth with new violence: neither party had fully succeeded in their objects; the colonists had obtained the repeal of all taxes but one & Great Britain had given up all but one, but that one was to accomplish its object by policy or violence: in the meantime the Colonies had to guard against both by their vigilance & firmness: they would import no tea, what came into the country was smuggled & England paused that she might be the better prepared to enforce taxation; in the meantime it was a happy circumstance to reflect on the prosecution of the arts of peace in which for the ensuing three years the colonies were eminently flourishing During this period M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin brought forward his essay on the migration of Herrings—this has been already noticed in his letter to the Society of Arts in London to whom one paper on the subject was addressed, but a more important one was presented to the Philosophical Society: a singular fate however attended this paper: the first volume of the Transactions of the Society was published before it was presented & before sufficient materials were formed for a second the revolutionary war came on during which the papers of the Society were much deranged or lost & the Society itself nearly annihilated until the year 1780 it was restored by a charter from the State of Pennsylvania & a second volume of transactions was published in 1786

containing such papers as had been preserved among which was this of Mr Gilpin's published in the name of John Gilpin of whom no one of the name was known to exist—the paper or rather copies of the papers & map accompanying them are still existing among Mr. Gilpins papers.

The immense migration of Herrings on the North western coast of Europe had existed from the earliest period of human recollection and the existence of the Herring Fishery to great extent is known so early as the twelfth century; it was notorious at all times that the immense shoals of Herring arrived from the Northern seas at the Orkneys in the month of June & on the North coast of Scotland their arrival is said to be fixed with precision on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of that month; from hence dividing one vast body of them pursued the eastern coast & German Ocean whilst another proceeded down the western coasts of England & Ireland filling the bays & rivers of both coasts during the summer months till in the autumn they united again at the entrance of the British Channel & were traced along the coast of France but not beyond it, but disappeared till the ensuing summer occasioning the general opinion of naturalists that they were bred & came from the northern seas and at the southern extremity of England retired into deep water. On discovery of America however the same fish were found to begin their visits in the most southern part of the United States with the earliest dawn of spring & accompany its advance northward until they left it about the latter end of May or June. In Europe they no where entered the fresh rivers or streams or were observed to breed or cast their spawn but in America they filled every recefs of fresh water for the purpose. These different habitudes of the fish had occasioned a belief in Europe that they were not the species of the two countries was different, but the observations of Mr. Gilpin in early life in the Chesapeake

where the fish existed to an immense extent & in later years in Europe convinced him they were identically the same Fish and that the whole history of their appearance in the two countries might be solved by considering them as a fish of passage whose migration might be traced through every month of the year, in a regular circuit beginning with the United States & ending with the shores of Europe and their disappearance in the autumn: upon this theory he formed a map of their migration elucidated by the papers referred to, which of course it would be proper to consult for a more extended view of the subject enough having been said for this biographical sketch.

As the family of Mr Gilpin came into life his attention became devoted to the subject of education; first for their particular instruction & afterwards for institutions of a more public nature—for the first purpose he employed or introduced in succession Dr. John Story, who afterwards was employed in the Pennsylvania Hospital, and the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Archibald Kennedy a dissenting minister from Scotland; both of these were men of great learning whom he engaged as private tutors for his own children & afterwards united with them enough of young people to form good private schools. About the year 1772 however the success of Dr. William Smith and the gentlemen united with him had rendered the College of Philadelphia a seminary of great celebrity & excellence & had created a desire to form initiatory grammar schools modelled upon the same plan in imitations of those of Europe.

In prosecution of this scheme it struck Mr. Gilpin that the high & healthy situation of Wilmington afforded a spot admirably formed for the purpose and accordingly it was undertaken by an association of some of the most respectable men of the country: among these were Mr. Penn, Mr. Chew, Mr. Allen, Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. Peters, Dr. White (the present venerable Bishop of

Pennsylvania) D<sup>r</sup>. Smith, M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin & M<sup>r</sup>. Pemberton of Philadelphia and Mr Read, M<sup>r</sup>. McKinley, the Rev<sup>d</sup>. M<sup>r</sup>. Gerelius, D<sup>r</sup>. Way & many others of Delaware—The first articles of association are dated 6<sup>th</sup>. Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1771 by which the advantages of the school & its position are set forth and the principles & form of it as a Grammar school designated—This was followed by an extensive subscription & the first school was opened under the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr Armor in the Town Hall over the lower Market House in Wilmington—This became immediately flourishing & it was soon found that greater accommodation was wanted, the result of which was that a large & handsome stone building was begun & erected in the upper part of the town; the lot for this purpose was given as a subscription by M<sup>r</sup>. Jonathan Dawes & the funds for erecting it were borrowed by M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin & two other Philadelphia trustees upon their private responsibility. On the completion of this building a very pathetic circular letter was written by Dr. Smith to invite support & encouragement for the school—this was dated 1<sup>st</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup> 1773 and the school soon became eminently flourishing—to M<sup>r</sup>. Armor was added D<sup>r</sup>. Patterson afterwards eminent as the Provost of Philadelphia College and President of the American Philosophical Society and in the course of the years 1773, 1774 & 1775 it was distinguished by the resort of a great many youth of the most respectable families in Maryland, Virginia & the other southern colonies & the West Indies. At one time it contained 150 scholars but in the year 1776 it became affected by the public troubles which convulsed every institution of the country Many of the elder pupils joined the army & became distinguished Officers, others were drawn away by their friends from the threatened attacks of the British fleet & armies to which Wilmington was exposed; the school therefore was broken up, the building taken for a military hospital & in this situation it remained till the

close of the war in 1783, but it was never revived with its original effect and the sequel of its history does not shew that it regained the public spirit with which it was begun or that the pleasantness of its situation & the improvements of literature seemed to have invited.

The original debt for building it was paid by the Son & executor of M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin, but it was sold for other debts & purchased by him as his private property in which situation it was left to the trustees for many years for its original uses—other debts however were suffered to accumulate & tho' there were several public donations they never extinguished its embarrassments: in 1803 it received a charter from the legislature forming it into a College but granting no funds for its support, till at length it became out of repair, was sold, pulled down & private buildings erected upon its site.

It is well known that in the year 1773 the English Government renewed their attempt to tax the colonies, by sending out several cargoes of teas, on which the obnoxious duty was to be paid—the teas were sent back from New York & Philadelphia but destroyed at Boston. These acts may be considered as the declaration of War & immediate forerunners of the Revolution, for altho' the hostilities were parried by a skirmish of civil regulations the battles of Lexington & Bunker's hill soon brought it to a contest of arms—during the year 1774 there were no hostile encounters the British retaliated upon Boston by shutting its port & appointing Gen<sup>l</sup>. Gage, the military commander in chief of the colonies, to be the Governor. This business was taken up by the rest of the colonies who appointed provincial Congresses or Committees and Delegates to the first general Congress which met at Philadelphia in September—Attention was also paid to collecting military stores in the several provinces and a general disposition prevailed to form volunteer corps. Still however the general hope prevailed that the dispute would be



terminated by appointing a native legislative body for the colonies—the prevailing sentiments however may be collected by the following extract of a letter of M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin's to a friend in England, D<sup>r</sup> Franklin having been dismissed from his office of Post Master General of North America—the letter alluded to is dated the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1774.

“politics are again the order of the day, I expect  
“you will not be fond of hearing of another non-  
“importation agreement and especially of debts  
“which has been talked of though not in this city—  
“our papers will show however that we are very  
“animated on the subject, on the former occasion  
“I was in favor of a partial non-importation & now  
“think the same measure would effect our purposes  
“by depressing luxury & promoting our manufac-  
“tories which would increase & form a sure basis of  
“our independence, if we go farther I am afraid that  
“without laws to bind us or compel an uniform con-  
“formity in our measures we may attempt some-  
“thing too violent to last & weaken our cause by  
“repealing or rescinding it, our differences with  
“England arise from the want of some certain pro-  
“vision in our charter for a conference on matters  
“of dispute and a representation of our interests  
“in this situation each party ought to contribute to  
“measures of mutual accommodation, but the British  
“parliament having adopted a most partial & dicta-  
“torial plan we justly reject it and intemperate con-  
“duct is the result on both sides. I hope most sin-  
“cerely there is some mode yet to be adopted by  
“which our rights & privileges may be amicably ad-  
“justed & a farther contest which seems likely to  
“ensue may be avoided. The emigration to our  
“country and the settlement of our western lands  
“are proceeding with great rapidity and a Congrefs  
“of Delegates from each province is to assemble here

“next month, when some very decisive measures  
“are talked of”

About this time M<sup>r</sup>. Gilpin brought forward the plan of a permanent bridge over the river Schuylkeyl at Philadelphia the pafsage of which had always been conducted at three ferries opposite to the city: for this purpose he obtained soundings of the river at the centre ferry at Market Street—the distance here acrofs the river was found to be 546 feet. 6 in. with a channel of 250 feet from 17 to 26 deep at low water gradually shallowing to the shore on each side but nearest to the eastern shore. Mr Gilpin’s idea was to reduce the width by abutments on each side to 300 feet of waterway and acrofs that to form a chain bridge upon a very simple plan: the whole expence was estimated at lefs than \$30.000. It is almost unnecefsary to say that this plan was never executed: the war soon difsipated the idea of every public improvement yet that war itself gave rise to another kind of bridge for pafsing the Schuylkeyl—It is scarcely to be doubted that the bridge over that river must have been contemplated for so promising a city as Philadelphia & it is probable that the necefsity for it was increased by the increase of communication to which the state of the country now gave rise. Notwithstanding the march of armies & military stores it was delayed for some years: on one occasion a french officer of distinction crofsing in the ferry boat on a spirited horse—the horse jumped out & his rider was drowned: this with other accidents occasioned the formation of a floating bridge instead of pontoons or boats: this kind of bridge, which is still existing at Grey’s ferry, was first erected at Market Street in 1779 and being imitated at the two other ferries served the purpose of communication till the erection of the present permanent bridge in 1802 or 1803

The early part of the year 1775 was almost uni-

versally occupied in forming volunteer companies: in the city of Philadelphia the arming was almost universal: confidence in the English government was lost and the belief that an appeal to arms would ensue occasioned the laying aside almost every other occupation to prepare for it: committees were chosen to guard the general safety and others for the purposes that seemed to be necessary and economical precautions, among the rest to encourage the manufacture of salt petre & to restrain the slaughter of lambs & sheep to create manufactures of wool and to husband everything that enters the list of military stores—In the midst of all this bustle Dr. Franklin landed from England on Market Street wharf amidst a host of his fellow citizens to whom he impressed the fact that they had no resource but in their own energy and determination In April the battle of Lexington was fought which was no other than an attempt to seize the military stores which the people of Massachusetts had collected at Concord; various other attempts of the kind by the king's officers led to similar tumults upon a smaller scale & the battle of Bunker's hill gave the contest all the regularity of a brave military resistance.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1775 Congress appointed Gen'l. Washington to the regular command of the forces of the country collected at Boston where he formed a regular camp to besiege that town from which he soon drove Genl. Gage & his forces. The army on this occasion was composed of the troops which were furnished by the several colonies; among them was a brother of Mr Gilpins, Col. George Gilpin of Alexandria, who from the beginning had joined Gen'l. Washington & marched with him to Boston at the head of a regiment which he continued to command for several years during the war. Another brother, Joseph Gilpin Esq<sup>r</sup>. of Elkton was a member of the provincial Congress of Maryland, and

a third brother Samuel Gilpin of North East became a Major in the army.

It is unnecessary to pursue the progress of the war further & to make that a subject of simple biography which properly belongs to history: it may be very justly remarked that politics occupied so wide a portion of thought & indeed of the business of man in the United States that they soon rush in to share or to supplant every other subject upon which writing is begun. It is perhaps in the private records of families their memorandums & letters that the richest materials for memoirs & history are to be drawn and the rescue of these from oblivion ought to be encouraged in every family however humble its situation. One fact is invaluable, that is the opportunity of collecting the sentiments & the conduct of the people of the Colonies in a struggle which had now lasted for upwards of ten years & to estimate the feelings of the various grades of life from the most timid to the most dauntless & again from those who were most interested as officers under the British government as proprietors who had an immense stake as citizens connected by relationship or business with England down to that class of people who must view the contest with indifference except indeed as to attachments of duty consanguinity or habit: perhaps there never was a revolution obtained more by unanimity and firmness, than that by the American people, nor under more dubious circumstances; they were the colonists & children of one of the greatest empires in existence & they required & received the assistance which was necessary to their growth; they were indeed eminently prosperous & happy & had only to go on in their existing career, but the idea of future domination was too appalling not to be universally resisted at the hazard of present happiness—but that hazard was immense; the power of Great Britain was great, their own resources feeble; the consequences of failure would

no doubt have involved them in all the penalties of treason & severe subjugation but the value of liberty was too great not to occasion every hazard & there was then no calculation of the loss of ships or commerce or the severest deprivations which was all before them. It was not to be doubted however that there was among the colonists a variety of opinion with regard to the mode of resistance & the extent to which it should be carried perhaps in the year 1776 a large majority of the people believed that their purposes were to be effected by civil regulations and that the security of their liberties might be obtained by some constitutional or parliamentary arrangement such as we have seen spoken of: however we may now look back & perceive how little these arrangements would have effected the glorious circumstances of our present empire we cannot but look back with an indulgence to the opinion of those who thought at the time that the contest might be gained without an appeal to arms.

Among all classes of people the situation of none was so trying as that of the quakers who were largely scattered thro' the continent but were very numerous & respectable in Pennsylvania: it is extremely well known that the religious principles of this people are absolutely averse to war or the use of arms in all cases whatsoever, and they certainly had to a very great extent influenced or conducted the civil government of Pennsylvania without it; it is no wonder therefore that they should use every effort for the purpose on the present occasion; no class of people had been more zealous or active in their exertions throughout the contest as far as it had proceeded & none was more determined in continuing it by every means that they could reconcile to their religious principles; even in the contest by arms a large portion of them threw off their scruples & joined their fellow citizens; in Philadelphia two battalions of them almost exclusively were formed

and the examples of Gen'. Mifflin and Gen'. Greene with many others may be given among the revolutionary officers of distinction; yet a large portion of the society could not go these lengths & as the war increased in temper as well as hostility so did their difficulties. The American revolution may be considered as singular in another character, that is, as marked by few or none of the bloody persecutions which have distinguished other revolutions; yet it is almost impossible that citizens contending in arms should not feel distrust or disapprobation of those who were less ardent than themselves & that the heat of war should not give the opportunity for private resentment against those who did not go all lengths—it is not strange therefore that in the very trying times of 1776 & 1777 these sentiments should be felt and acted on without the coolness or justice of more temperate times; distrusts & antipathies took place against the quakers of Philadelphia even those who had always united in the measures of the country & were at that moment ardent for their success; in the course of the summer of the year 1777 Congress recommended to the Government of the several States to apprehend & secure all persons who had evinced a disposition inimical to the cause of America: this measure which was actually intended for a very different description of people was made the means of arresting the principal quakers of Philadelphia who conscious of their integrity refused to confine themselves upon their parole which was all that was required of them and were in consequence confined in the Freemasons Lodge, then situated where the Bank of Pennsylvania now stands, under a military guard appointed for the purpose.

On this occasion it is a matter of surprise how the measure became dictated against the parties & who furnished the list of names & when a great many years afterwards it was discovered among the archives of

Congrefs it was seen to be a matter of private jealousy & persecution more than public safety or necessity. The real enemies of their country by bowing to the storm & signing the requisition remained at their houses until the arrival of the British Army released them & they afterwards became conspicuously rewarded; not so the quakers who felt the blow against their character as inconsistent with the spirit of liberty which had dictated the revolution and by an appeal to Congrefs and their fellow citizens in a very masterly pamphlet to obtain a hearing and that their release should be from the same hand that had occasioned their arrest and under those circumstances which should wipe away all reproach from their characters and restore them to the opinion of their fellow citizens with the merit they claimed for their conduct; but at the time of their confinement the tumult of the city prevented all regular business: the cannon of Genl. Howe's army was thundering at the Brandywine within two days march; Congrefs itself adjourned to Yorktown, the city became largely evacuated and in the hurry of the occasion the quakers were sent under a military escort to Winchester in Virginia. Here their case became an object of examination by Congrefs and the respectability of their characters, the part they had acted and their innocence as to every feeling except what their religion dictated became so conspicuous that they were released without hesitation & suffered to proceed to their homes in their own way even tho' those homes were in a city occupied by the British Army.

This release however was alas too late for Mr. Gilpin, who steady in his principles as a quaker had been among those who were marked out on the occasion: stung however at the injustice of the measure contrary to the whole tenor of his life & principles he keenly felt its injustice. At Winchester the party found themselves in the bosom of friends, among whom they were

suffered to entertain themselves without restraint: not long after their arrival Co<sup>l</sup>. Gilpin was sent by Gen<sup>l</sup>. Washington to examine the situation of his brother whose release was offered to him, but the party felt themselves bound by a common tie to assert their innocence & effect their justification & release unitedly and to this determination he fell a victim.

Mr. Gilpin's person was above the middle height & stout tho' not corpulent; his features were regular & his complexion fair; there was an uncommon sweetness of temper in his disposition, but it was united with much sensibility & there is no question that his situation preyed upon his mind: among his letters and papers are a number of philosophic studies & amusements with which he sought to amuse & beguile his time, but there is no question that the thoughts of home & his unjust separation from it preyed upon his mind; this was the more afflicting as he had left an amiable wife & three children in a city occupied by a hostile garrison where at one time there was great want of provision. These circumstances led at length to a fatal disease with which he was attacked in the month of Feb<sup>r</sup>. and died after a week's illness. One fellow exile had preceded him Mr. John Hunt a minister of the quaker society and the two were buried side by side in the graveyard of Hopewell meeting house where their graves were long distinguished as those of the *exiled quakers*.

Mr. Gilpin was in his 50<sup>th</sup> year at the time of his death—this tribute to his memory is no other than the pious offering of a son to a parent who he affectionately loved and here the offering might rest equally removed from censure & applause—It is but justice however to say that the object of it may be considered as an instance of some distinction among those good men who composed the early settlement of Pennsylvania whose memoirs, if they were more frequently brought for-



ward, would greatly elucidate its early history & it is to be hoped that one effect in this instance may produce many more of the kind; in general tracing their descent to respectable english families but without large fortunes they applied to surmount the deficiencies of education by their talents & to perform the duties of society & of public life and to rise to distinction with the increase of the country they inhabited. Such were the general features of those who rose to distinction with the city of Philadelphia and colony of Pennsylvania; in this instance we cannot but contemplate with pleasure the character of a man who by the force of his mind redeemed the loss of education by his talents & proceeded to attain the benefits of foreign travel of society & literary or philosophic distinction & to create a good fortune within the limits of a life of no long period

*Digrum lande virum musa vetat mori*