

*The Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742**

“**W**EE ARE thoroughly sensible of the Great Disadvantage Sir William Keith’s management has been to our Interest,” the Pennsylvania Proprietors wrote to James Logan, “but we hope now he is in England the People will Coole in their Zeal to his Party, so that we may get a good Assembly Chose.”¹ Their hope was already a reality. Keithian politics no longer had any significance; the old coalition which had gathered around the fiery and independent Governor ceased to exist almost with his departure for England in 1728. Only five of his supporters were returned to the legislature in 1729, and by the following year but three remained.² The issues which created the controversies during the 1720’s were already *passé*. The old leadership either died off, or gave up its positions of power, and in turn was supplanted during the next decade by a group of talented and younger men—Benjamin Franklin, Isaac Norris II, Israel Pemberton, Jr., William Allen, and James Hamilton.³

While party organization may have been more advanced in Pennsylvania than in any other colony, it still depended upon personal relationships with control in the hands of a few wealthy families. The

* This article, in somewhat different form, was read at a session devoted to early Pennsylvania history during the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association at Stanford University on Aug. 29, 1967.

¹ The Proprietors to James Logan, Nov. 11, 1728, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, VII, 111-112.

² In 1728 all of the representatives of Philadelphia County and City, except for Morris Morris, walked out of the Assembly in support of Keith. Of these nine men, only William Monington, John Kearsley, and Thomas Tress remained in 1730. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 1879, 1906, 2037.

³ David Lloyd died in 1731. Those Keithians who remained in the Assembly joined the proprietary faction, and the emergence of a new group of young leaders signaled the rapid decline of old party alignments. This can best be seen by examining the election returns in the *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, listed for each year under date of October 14. For the make up of the two coalitions as they existed in 1740, see Isaac Norris to Robert Charles, Oct. 11, 1740, Norris Letter Book, 1719-1756, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. All manuscripts cited are from the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

ruling elite of both proprietary and antiproprietary factions were of the same class, and the struggles that existed were between members of the identical socio-economic sector of society. Both were opposed to democracy. They fought for power, place, and preferment and the resulting privileges. The wishes of the people counted for little, and were heard but once a year—on October 1, election day. Both the Proprietors and their political opponents expressed concern for the people, but neither side sought to share power or profits with them.⁴

From the beginning factionalism developed over specific issues: land policy, executive *versus* legislative power, mercantile advantages, judicial tenure, responsibility for defense, paper money, proprietary prerogative, and quitrents. But such disputes as existed never lasted beyond the immediate problems which had created the conflict. This was true in the seventeenth century; it was true of the Keithian disturbances. Only with the outbreak of war in 1739, and after the Philadelphia election of 1742, did the coalitions become formalized and the issues solidified.

At the conclusion of the Keithian period the membership in the Assembly was not totally Quaker, nor even Quaker controlled; contested elections were fewer than usual, and party disputes on the ebb. The colony was calm. No rift existed between east and west, nor between Quaker and Presbyterian. Andrew Hamilton, despite his position in the proprietary faction, was continually elected to represent Bucks County, and he was time and again chosen Speaker.⁵ It was only in time of crisis, of war or economic dislocation, that antiproprietary opposition developed in the Assembly. Peace and prosperity brought with them political tranquility.⁶

⁴ The refusal of the Assembly to print divisions or to grant adequate representation to western counties, along with its reasoning behind its denial of funds for defense, are indications of the type of "democracy" that the Quaker-controlled Assembly represented. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 2530, and IV, 3030. The similarity of the social positions between such men as Israel Pemberton (father and son), Isaac Norris—or almost any Quaker merchant—with his proprietary counterpart, such as William Allen or James Hamilton, seems too obvious to need further statement.

⁵ Andrew Hamilton, the famed Pennsylvania attorney, emerged as a leader of the proprietary party, "notwithstanding it is not his Natural Disposition to be on the Side of those who are accounted Great or are in Power." James Logan to Henry Gouldney, May 7, 1723, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence (PPOC), I, 125. Note also that no German represented Lancaster County in the Assembly.

⁶ Anon., *Advice to the Free-Holders and Electors of Pennsylvania &c.* (Philadelphia, 1735).

Yet old wounds remained, and the apparent serenity was only surface deep. With news of war in 1739 the harmonious spirit collapsed. There had, to be sure, been earlier indications of discord. In 1736 Governor Patrick Gordon had died, and the president of the Council presided over the Assembly. Flare-ups ensued over the nature of the interim government and the question of providing funds for an Indian meeting.⁷ When Governor George Thomas finally arrived, he assessed the situation and expressed his desire for a peaceful administration and the "stiffing [of] all Party Disputes,"⁸ but instead he was challenged by a money bill which begot troublesome conflict for him with the Assembly. A compromise was arranged, though a formidable opposition of eight Assemblymen out of twenty-five objected to any seeming surrender to proprietary privilege.⁹

These were obvious signs of awakening factionalism. Yet in 1739 proprietary leader Andrew Hamilton announced his retirement from all public office, and his son-in-law William Allen followed suit. "I had served on the Assembly these Nine Years past," Allen explained to John Penn, "& as most of our Disputes seem to be at an End & the Province's Affairs upon very good Footing I choose to Decline being concerned this Year as . . . Mr. Hamilton & several others of our Friends have done." This proprietary exodus is all the more remarkable as news of the approaching war had already reached the colony. Quakers quickly filled the vacated seats in the Assembly.¹⁰

So it was that Governor Thomas faced a thoroughly Quaker Assembly, one opposed to taking any steps toward preparing the colony for war. They would do "nothing but Trust in the Lord," as William Allen expressed it.¹¹ Acting on his own initiative, Thomas began enlisting indentured servants into a hastily organized militia. This step enraged a large segment of the voters whose opposition found expression in the Assembly. All pledges of money for the King's use were held up until compensation could be arranged for the mas-

⁷ William Allen to John Penn, Oct. 3, 1736, PPOC, III, 23; Penn to Allen, Feb. 17, 1736, Penn Letter Books, I, 192-193; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 2405, 2374-2378, 2396-2397.

⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 2406.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2408-2413, 2413-2483; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 13, 1739.

¹⁰ William Allen to John Penn, Nov. 17, 1739, PPOC, III, 91; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Sept. 6, 1739; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 2505-2508.

¹¹ William Allen to John Penn, Nov. 17, 1739, PPOC, III, 91.

ters who had been deprived of their property, and legislative proceedings came to a halt. The Assembly appealed its case to England, and withheld financial assistance from the harassed Governor, who had to be dissuaded from resigning.¹²

The proprietary members who had given up their seats believed they could return to the Assembly whenever they so desired. They were mistaken. William Allen, who replaced his father-in-law as head of the proprietary party in the 1740 elections, felt certain he could break the Quaker control in Bucks and Philadelphia, but he was overwhelmed by the sudden appearance of a large number of pro-Quaker German voters who had never before cast a ballot. Allen himself had solicited the German vote, which he felt was the key to political supremacy in the province. Bitter in defeat, his plea for immediate defensive works along the Delaware was offset by the Quaker do-nothing policy.¹³

The legislative deadlock continued in the Assembly, while the Quakers sought to have Thomas removed from office and the colony placed under the Crown. The proprietary party attempted to counter the Quakers by initiating a petition making it illegal for Friends to hold office during time of war. Meanwhile, a small group of Quakers under James Logan, working closely with Allen, attempted to wrench control of the Yearly Meeting out of pacifist hands, and to drive a wedge between the Quaker-German alliance.¹⁴ Failure met both efforts; the elections of 1741 were fought tooth and nail, and once again the Quakers won. In Philadelphia, Quaker and proprietary leaders exchanged blows at the ballot box.¹⁵

Throughout 1742 the major attention in the colony was focused on the fate of the proprietary petition, but as the elections approached news arrived that the petition had met with ill success at a hearing before the Board of Trade.¹⁶ Members of the proprietary party, dis-

¹² Theodore Thayer, *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1953), 11-17; Mabel Pauline Wolff, *The Colonial Agency of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1933), 79-83; George Thomas to John Penn, Mar. 1, 1740, PPOC, III, 105.

¹³ William Allen to John Penn, Mar. 27, 1741, *ibid.*, 143.

¹⁴ Wolff, 79-94; William Allen to John Penn, Oct. 24, 1741, PPOC, III, 201.

¹⁵ Samuel Noble to John Smith, Oct. 3, 1741, Correspondence of John Smith.

¹⁶ Richard Partridge to John Kinsey, Feb. 4, June 28, and July 9, 1742, Pemberton Papers, III, 51-52, 55; William Allen to Thomas Penn, Oct. 24, 1741, and July 8, 1742, PPOC, III, 201, 227, 229.

appointed in their hopes to gain control, advocated strong measures in the coming contest. The violence of their suggestions fits in with the violence of the times: war fright, lawlessness, rumored election disorders, increasing bread prices, personal and political strife all made for frayed nerves. To aggravate the situation further, the need for defense played heavily upon the fears of the inhabitants and sailors in the port city.¹⁷

Elections in Philadelphia were held at the Court House at Market and Second Streets. Inns and grog shops abounded in the area, and it was but a few blocks to the wharves where idle sailors congregated. Rumors were rampant, but two stood out: one, that the Quakers were planning to bring unnaturalized Germans from the country to vote in the election; the other, that the proprietary party had hired armed sailors to drive the Quakers from the Court House.¹⁸ Adding to the confusion was the expiration of the 1739 election law which had provided a simplified system for choosing inspectors.¹⁹ Inspectors were extremely important. They were the judges of the legality of the election process, and they alone could open a suspect ballot, depriving the voter of his secrecy, or challenge his right to participate.

Now inspectors would be selected by the old method whereby the electorate would gather at the polling places to hear the sheriffs call off the names of candidates for that office. The voters would then have to push and shove their way through the throng to stand by their choice. This meant the intermingling of the mob in a crowded area. Mob, rum, and rumors added up to a volatile mixture that

¹⁷ So much attention has been paid to the need for defense on the frontier that the equally significant efforts along the Delaware have been ignored. It is noticeable in the 1740's, and to some extent in the "Great War for the Empire," that much effort was spent in acquiring cannons and works to defend the river by men of different factions such as William Allen and Benjamin Franklin. This need for defense made natural allies out of non-Quaker city dweller and Presbyterian frontiersmen.

¹⁸ For a convenient map showing locations of dwellings, inns, and wharves, see Grant Simon *Part of Old Philadelphia, A Map Showing Historic Buildings & Sites, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia, 1953). The account of the riot and the activities leading up to it are well documented in *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2849-3009 in statements, which though highly biased in favor of the Quakers, are a valuable source and make the riot of 1742 the best documented in colonial history.

¹⁹ James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania*, IV, 331-336, 359-360; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2999; Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, "Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XI (1954), 385-401; Paul Veritt, *To My Friends in Pensilvania* (Philadelphia, 1738?).

William Allen attempted to head off by a compromise. He urged each party to choose four inspectors, but the Quakers, sure of victory, were not interested.²⁰

On election eve a Quaker meeting was held to make some last minute plans and to establish a slate of candidates. William Allen sent four of his own party with his compromise suggestion, which was again turned down as illegal; the lawful means of electing inspectors lay with the people.²¹ To no avail Allen's men pointed out unnaturalized Germans who were present and who planned to vote; the Quaker party would take no action.

On election morning groups of sailors were observed throughout the city, and one person reported that he had overheard them say that they intended to "knock down the broad Brims."²² The Quakers became nervous, and sent a small delegation to Mayor Clement Plumsted, while another group went to see William Allen, who, as Recorder, was expected to maintain the peace.²³ Plumsted was asleep, but Allen received the committee which demanded he break up all gatherings of "strangers." Resenting the manner in which he was addressed, Allen angrily charged the Quakers with relying on the votes of unqualified Germans. Just then thirty unarmed sailors approached, and Allen went over to talk with them. When asked what business they had in the city, the mariners replied that they were on holiday and "were going out of Town to be merry." After being warned not to interfere with the elections in any way, they were allowed to proceed, but the Quakers were not convinced that Allen had done his duty.²⁴

By this time Plumsted had arisen and met with them. He did not see what he could do as no overt act had taken place, and, he emphasized, the sailors had "as much Right at the Election as the Dutchmen." However, the Mayor did draw up a proclamation ordering everyone to keep the peace, and this message was subsequently read aloud by the Sheriff as the polls opened.²⁵

²⁰ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 3005-3006.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2964, 2978, 3005-3006.

²² *Ibid.*, 2981.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2963, 2966, 2972, 2974.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2845-2846, 2958-2959, 2991.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2957-2958.

While these activities were taking place, some of the sailors had gathered at the Indian King tavern, where the Quaker Thomas Lloyd claimed to have overheard the cry, "every Man his Dram; and then march." Recognizing a Captain Mitchell as the leader of the men, Lloyd, now joined by Israel Pemberton, Jr., walked over and demanded that he act more like a gentleman and not so demean himself as to appear at the head of such a mob. This tactless approach aroused Mitchell and an argument followed. Pemberton then decided to take matters under his control, and calling over the tavern keeper, Peter Robinson, "desired he would not give the Sailors any Liquor, as they appeared too warm." Like Mitchell, Robinson objected to the Quaker's remarks and heatedly replied that he ran a public house and would serve whomever he pleased, proving the point by pouring out a large glass of rum for Captain Mitchell.²⁶

Returning to Mitchell's table, Pemberton desired another word with him. "Damn you," responded Mitchell angrily "what do you want with me." Pemberton wanted Mitchell to disperse his men, or else "find sureties for their good behaviour, or be committed." "Damn you," Mitchell sputtered, "commit Me!"²⁷ Then, according to Pemberton, Mitchell reached under his coat and withdrew a cudgel; the peace-loving Quakers beat a hasty retreat. From the Indian King they returned to Allen's house, and ordered the Recorder to bind Mitchell over. Allen replied that the "Sailors had as much right to walk the Streets as the unnaturalized Dutch." Again an argument ensued, and Pemberton somewhat presumptuously proclaimed that Allen's refusal to act against the sailors made him responsible for their actions.²⁸

By now well fortified with rum, and enraged at being charged with disturbing the peace, Mitchell sought out Pemberton, and this time, according to the Quaker, threatened him. The aristocratic Pemberton and the lowly sea captain shouted heated insults back and forth before words gave way to blows. Joseph Turner, an Alderman and Allen's business partner, was in the crowd that gathered, and he soon added to the confusion by becoming involved in an altercation with the elder Pemberton.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2959, 2967.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2968, 2975.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2847, 2968-2969, 3007.

These disputants descended upon the Court House at ten o'clock when John Hyatt, the Sheriff of Philadelphia, opened the elections. Shouting through an amplifying horn, he put forward the name of William Allen for inspector. When this produced few votes, Allen claimed that his supporters were unable to pass through the dense crowd. He suggested that the proceedings might be made easier if everyone left the vicinity and reassembled according to party. The Quakers refused this plan, putting it down as a ruse. Again Hyatt unsuccessfully put forward Allen as a candidate. He then put up Isaac Norris who obtained a large number of votes, and was proclaimed a duly elected inspector.³⁰

As if on signal, some fifty to seventy sailors, armed with clubs, appeared, marching from the Jersey Markets one block to the east. When they drew near they gave a loud huzza and began swinging at the Quakers in an effort to clear them away from the Court House steps and so prevent them and the Germans from voting. While the electorate retreated before this assault, the Sheriff issued constables' staffs to those citizens willing to defend their rights. In the resulting melee quite a few persons were severely injured, including old Israel Pemberton whose hand was broken.³¹ However, this attack by the sailors was driven back.

During the riot, William Allen was around the corner, so surrounded by his friends, he claimed, that he neither saw nor heard the "Disorders committed by the Sailors." Word of it was brought to him by James Morris, a Quaker, who informed him of what was happening "with a haughty menacing Air." Upset by the manner in which he was ordered to do his duty, "as he did not esteem himself entirely under Mr. Morris's Direction," Allen went with Morris to the Court House. By the time he arrived the sailors had withdrawn and all he saw was Charles Willing returning the blows of a servant who had given him a sound kick during the fracas.³²

The sailors in the meanwhile regrouped for a second assault. This time they gained their objective, and some of the Quakers retreated into the Court House bolting the doors behind them. The attackers, believing that some of their fellows were being held prisoner inside, increased their efforts. Windows were smashed, and the area com-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2976-2977, 3008.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2850, 2958, 2965, 2978, 2979, 2980, 2985, 3009.

³² *Ibid.*, 2846.

pletely emptied of all but the wounded and the belligerents. At the height of the battle a Quaker spokesman convinced the sailors that none of their shipmates were being held. This, serving to break the assault's momentum, aided a counterattack by armed Germans and Quakers, seemingly without their usual regard for pacifism, which carried the day. The sailors were driven from the field and the elections were then completed in peace.³³

During this second disturbance Allen had tried to suppress the riot at the high point of the attack. Bricks were flying, people were in full flight, and Allen could obtain no assistance. Nevertheless, he disregarded the pleas of his friends and "singly went among the Sailors, and told them they were a Parcel of Villains." One of these "Villains," a "squat, full-faced, Pock fretten Man, with a light Wig, and red breeches," shouted "Let's give Mr. Allen a Whorrah." The Recorder angrily replied he wanted none of their "huzzas" and ordered them away from the Court House.³⁴

Though the riot was over, its repercussions were just beginning. For the proprietary party the election proved to be a disaster; many voters had altered their ballots, crossing out Allen's name and replacing it with that of a Quaker opponent. Allen's defeat was credited to the disorders, and it was noted, "he has suffered much as to popularity."³⁵ Again the "broad brims" had won at the polls. In the aftermath of the riotous day fifty-four sailors and their leaders were cast into jail.³⁶ A watch was posted, and the doctors kept busy that night.

Political factionalism was not healed as quickly as were the broken bones resulting from the riot for the Assembly saw political gains to be made from the disorders of the day. The proprietary party had been in difficulties on many fronts: the governor had been unpaid for more than two years; the proprietary petition to remove the Quakers from the Assembly had failed; no funds had been granted for the war effort; and the Assembly was completely under Quaker control with

³³ *Ibid.*, 2977.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2847, 2984.

³⁵ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Nov. 1, 1742, PPOC, III, 241; election returns in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Oct. 7, 1742. Benjamin Franklin was remarkably silent about the affair. The *Gazette* merely carried a descriptive account with no suggestions or hints as to who was responsible.

³⁶ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2971, 2987.

the able John Kinsey as Speaker. On top of all this the riot was now used to discredit Allen, the proprietary leader.³⁷

In an attempt to clear his name, Allen, with "unrighteous indignation" sued Israel Pemberton, Jr., for having openly declared that Allen had plotted with the sailors. Kinsey was hired by Pemberton to defend him in the suit for slander. Finally, the entire investigation of the riot was turned over to the Assembly.³⁸ Allen objected to this as the procedural rules did not allow the accused to face his accusers, nor to cross-examine witnesses. Only after all depositions had been taken would they be allowed to give their own accounts. To Allen, the Quaker party

left no stone unturned to Distress & Render a Man uneasy by Slander & most base Calumny. Their Printed Minutes is a fresh Instance of this, in which they have Published a Parcel of Ex-parte Affirmations Taken when these People were in Heat which Contain the grossest Falsehoods & a Suppression of the Truth & every Thing that did not Suit the Party.³⁹

To mask the Assembly's intent, a petition was arranged making it appear that the investigation had arisen from the demand of an outraged public. Eighteenth-century petitions were seldom expressions of the public will, but were useful devices by which the ruling elite could give that impression. As this fact was well understood by all concerned, it was considered more important to know *who* had signed the document, rather than *how many*.⁴⁰

Three days after receiving the petition, the Assembly opened its hearings. With but few exceptions, the forty-nine witnesses were of the Quaker party. None of the sailors nor sea captains involved testified; the question regarding the presence of unqualified Germans was considered irrelevant. Contradictions in statements went unchallenged; testimony which was so similar in its wording as to suggest collusion passed unquestioned. The investigations were carried out to show that Allen, his business partner Joseph Turner, Mayor Clement Plumsted, and two others had been negligent in their duties and had thereby subverted the Pennsylvania Charter. In addition,

³⁷ Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Nov. 1, 1742, PPOC, III, 241.

³⁸ Thayer, *Growth of Democracy*, 18-19; and his *Israel Pemberton: King of the Quakers* (Philadelphia, 1943), 48-49; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2848.

³⁹ William Allen to Thomas Penn, Oct. 8, 1743, PPOC, III, 275.

⁴⁰ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 2346.

Allen was proclaimed the instigator of the riot. Each of the five accused persons was allowed to make a statement in his own behalf, but only at the end of the proceedings, and without information regarding the nature of the charges against them. The burden of proof was upon them.⁴¹

The investigation proceeded through the winter. Allen and his friends had their remonstrances disallowed as casting aspersions on the Assembly's proceedings. Then the legislature recommended that the collected statements be turned over to the Quaker-dominated Supreme Court for legal action. The Governor, on advice of his Council and Attorney General, expressed the opinion that the Mayor's Court of the city had legal jurisdiction. There the Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen would hear the case.⁴² Naturally, the Assembly objected to the accused sitting in their own judgment and the proceedings between Governor and Assembly once more were deadlocked.

But a move toward compromise was underway. John Kinsey suggested to the Governor that in return for Thomas' signature on certain bills he would receive his salary, so much for each act. The charges against Allen and the others were dropped, the slander charges against Pemberton withdrawn, Kinsey was made Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and steps were taken to prevent future riots. Contrary to Allen's suspicions, the Assembly seemed earnestly desirous of making this compromise work, and of ending their differences with the Governor. Allen continued to believe that this "peaceable disposition" would not be of "long continuance," and in this he was correct.⁴³

In interpreting this episode, commentators, both then and now, have accepted the Assembly's account without too much question.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 2820, 2995; Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Oct. 18, 1742, "Letters from the Letter-Book of Richard Hockley," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XXVIII (1904), 36-37. Hockley's testimony was the most damaging to Allen, though he thought the Recorder innocent. Later, in the midst of an argument, he changed his mind and said Allen knew of the plans for the disturbance prior to election day. This I believe was not true. Hockley at one point even insinuated that the riot was a Catholic plot. Hockley to Penn, Nov. 1, 1742, PPOC, III, 241; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2843-2845.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2836-2839, 2877-2883.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2865-2866, 2895; Isaac Norris to Robert Charles, June 22, 1743, Norris Letter Book, 1719-1756; Allen to Penn, August, 1743, PPOC, III, 263.

For fourteen years after the riot William Allen was not re-elected to the Assembly, and when he did return it was as a representative of the frontier county of Cumberland. It was believed that, in attempting to offset German assistance to the Quaker party during the war, Allen had resorted to violent means. Yet sufficient proof to support this view has never existed, and certainly Allen had nothing to gain by the riot. William Allen was a clever politician who never in his long career had to use such crass methods. Always careful of his reputation, in the 1742 election he lost both at the polls and in the esteem of the public. If the riot could not benefit Allen or his party, it is also true that the Quakers, already certain of victory, had nothing to gain by it either and did not instigate it willfully. An aid to understanding its cause is found in the remonstrance of Joseph Turner when he asserted that the Quakers' haughty confrontation with Captain Mitchell "in a great Measure, occasioned the ensuing Disorders of the Day."⁴⁴

Political struggles in Pennsylvania had been between contending aristocratic forces, fighting for power, wealth, and preferment. When an issue arose which affected them as a group, they worked together for their common interest.⁴⁵ But when an individual privilege was at stake, it was an internecine, intra-class contest which ignored the mass of the population. When the populace was solicited for its vote, the only choice offered was between members of the elite. In addition, the electorate was normally small, and seldom expressive of the popular will. But the relationship between the ruling elite and the people was changing. Quite often this was expressed in disturbing outbreaks, such as the demonstrations during the Keithian decade, and the not unusual riots in colonial port cities.⁴⁶ However, these were not conscious nor well-articulated protests. Adequate leadership was often lacking, though the complaints were real. Consequently,

⁴⁴ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2843-2847.

⁴⁵ In the 1730's the entire Assembly debated such difficult subjects as the Parliamentary passage of the Molasses Act, the establishment of courts of equity, and the boundary dispute with Baltimore with complete agreement as to what was in the interest of all. *Ibid.*, III, 2127, 2267-2271, 2307-2350.

⁴⁶ Carl Bridenbaugh in *Cities in Revolt* (New York, 1964), 114, makes this point, stating that mob action was often an important expression of "public opinion." The election riot of 1742 parallels perfectly the description of mob action in George Rude's *The Crowd in History* (New York, 1964).

the governing class did not recognize the growing demand for political power; what it continued to expect from the people was mere acquiescence.

In the election of 1742, Israel Pemberton and the Quakers were aware of the riot rumors and were desirous of preventing the outbreak of violence. They demanded that the sailors leave the city limits, that they not drink, that they disperse their gatherings. According to their own testimony they proceeded to act against the sailors in an arrogant, haughty, and insolent manner. It was in this mood, believing his social position demanded instant submission, that the twenty-four-year-old Pemberton pounced upon Captain Mitchell. Turner, in his remonstrance, indicated how this stirred up ill feelings, and he was supported by other testimony. One witness remembered that in the midst of the riot Pemberton was a special target for the seamen: "By God, we'll kill Pemberton," one shouted, and this was answered by cries of "so we will." The natural antipathy to "Quaker Sons of Bitches . . . Men with broad Hats and no pockets" was also a factor in war time. When the mariners were ordered to return to their ships, they replied, "You are Damned Quakers, you are Enemies to King George, and we will knock you all in the Head."⁴⁷

This episode was the result of forces little understood by the participants or onlookers. In war time it was as important to provide defensive works on the Delaware as it was to arm the frontiersmen. River fortifications were essential, yet the Quaker Assembly had refused to act. The Allen party backed strong military steps and undoubtedly had the support of the voteless sailors. On election day the unruly sailors, exasperated by Quaker arrogance, failed to respond to the voice of authority. They cast their "ballots" by the only means possible—violence born of frustration.

The aftermath of riot was compromise and apparent political calm. Isaac Norris thought the colony had passed through a "revolution of Uncommon Size." The proprietary party seemed broken. In the next election Allen received but three votes, and indeed for the next ten years "no parties powerful Enough to make any Consider-

⁴⁷ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, IV, 2843–2845, 2996, 3003.

able Opposition" existed.⁴⁸ Debarred from elective office, Allen and his followers maintained their appointive positions. Their political power was entirely dependent upon proprietary favor, whereas their Quaker opposition found support among the electorate, and thereby came to identify itself more readily with a democratic basis. It was this separation between "in and out" that solidified the two groups into strong coalitions. With the growing influx of non-Quakers on the frontier, and with the outbreak of war in 1754, the proprietary party emerged stronger than ever. It gained important allies in the frontier communities and found itself once more represented in the Assembly.

The leadership and to some extent the issues remained the same. Two parties struggled for power while the masses of the populace were effectively barred from participation in government. Only with the Revolution was a genuinely democratic system established, superseding the coalitions forged in the forties.

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⁴⁸ Isaac Norris to Robert Charles, June 22, Aug. 11, 1743, and Nov. 16, 1748, Norris Letter Book, 1719-1756.